CONVERSATION.



A NOVEL.

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CONVERSATION;

OR,

SHADES OF DIFFERENCE.

A Novel.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY

MRS. HERON.

VOL. I.

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CONVERSATION.

CHAPTER I.

Some fretful tempers wince at every touch—
You always do too little, or too much:
You speak with life, in hopes to entertain—
Your elevated voice goes through the brain!
At once you sink into a lower key—
That's worse—the drone-pipe of a humble bee.

COWPER.

"ASHBOURNE, don't walk about the room so fast," said lady Rosvellyn to her son, as he paced hastily up and down the large library where she was sitting by the fire; "stopping every moment

ment to speak, and turning round like a weathercock, so constantly, you make such a current of air in the room, I shall catch cold. Ah, surely you have been reading Dante so long, you wish we should both share the pains of purgatory along with Paulo and Francesca. Sit down, if you value my comfort."

"Very well, mother, I will go out of the house and walk."

"Worse, my dear child; the snow will soak through your boots—I shall have you laid up with an ulcerated sore throat; and, delicate as you are, your constitution will be ruined, and you will die in a decline."

"Really, as you are so fearful," rejoined the obedient son, "I will not go out walking, but play a game at battledore——"

"Don't finish the sentence!" screamed her ladyship. "Shuttlecock! horrid!—it makes me tremble like an aspen leaf to hear it mentioned even; my al-

ready-

ready-weak nerves would be absolutely unstrung by the knock, knock, knocking again of that abominable pastime."

Lord Ashbourne smiled good-humouredly, and, with an unruffled brow and serene aspect, took down a volume of lord Clarendon's Rebellion, seated himself by the library-table, drew a reading-desk near him, and had just turned over two pages of the book, when his mother's voice was again heard, exclaiming, in accents of alarm and agitation—" Ashbourne, the inflammation in your eyes! Gracious Heaven! my only son will be blind before he is thirty, poring over those eternal books for ever; leaning on the table too! your chest, Howard, believe me, will get as narrow as a——"

" Chicken's, madam," interrupted lord Ashbourne, starting up impatiently; " but really, if you were not so chicken-hearted, it would be as well for your own comfort and my repose."

 " There!

" There! there!—so passionate! my life, which is hanging by a single thread, will be broken by your violence; at all events, my spirits will be so dreadfully agitated, I shall be obliged to dine in my own room to-morrow, if you continue to speak so rudely; and then my daughter Caroline will be grieved, and her gunpowder Hotspur of a husband affronted."

" Oh, mother, mother, mother!" cried lord Ashbourne, " do not, let me entreat, let me implore you, work up your feelings to such a state of unheard-of nervousness. Well, I will leave you to solitude and silence, the best opiates to calm the mind, when under the pressure of real or imaginary evil; and, as you certainly dislike society, and detest walking, talking, reading, or any other amusement under heaven, except scolding, I myself will depart, and go out riding, to try to gallop away the demons of spleen and ill-nature, who at present

seem

seem inclined to be my constant and only companions. Much do I fear, however, that they will also—'*Montes en croupe et gallopes avec moi.*"

So saying he left the room, without waiting to hear the prohibition he perceived lady Rosvellyn only waited time to give utterance to.

"Riding, riding, riding!" cried the peevish countess, exalting her shrill voice to its utmost pitch of wonder and alarm, and then sinking it into a most deplorable whine; "my son will be thrown off his restive horse—of course the snow will make him fall asleep—he will be killed on the spot, and there will be an end to the little happiness I enjoy in this miserable world, as well as to that headstrong boy's life. Here am I left alone, with no one to pity my sufferings."

"Sufferings, my dear aunt!" said a voice from behind, "who talks of sufferings? Oh! could I find a pang to

 rend

rend my heart, or fill my mind with any other feeling than that of ennui, *je serai charmé—oui, je serai charmé de trouver des chagrins et des pleurs moi-même; car, helas! je ne rencontre partout que des sourires insipides, ou des plaintes amères.*"

Lady Rosvellyn raised her frail frame from the sofa on which she had thrown herself, sat upright, put her feet on a high footstool, dried her fine eyes, applied a smelling-bottle to her nose, and looked upon the intruding stranger with a comic expression of mingled surprise and terror impressed upon her faded, yet still-beautiful countenance.

He was a fashionable-looking young man, of about five-and-twenty, with that dignity, yet carelessness of mien, which generally characterizes *l'homme bien né.* His eyes, though he was at present trying to make them appear expressive of languor and apathy, were lighted up with the fire of intellect and

intelligence,

intelligence, and large, dark, and penetrating, gave an air of shrewdness and archness to features, which, high, noble, and commanding, would otherwise have impressed on the mind of the beholder an idea of pride, gravity, and haughtiness. Even now his countenance visibly indicated that lord Frederic Beauchief, such was the stranger's name, was well aware of his superiority, both mental and personal, as well as in rank and affluence, to the common herd of mankind, on whom, apparently, he looked down as if they were "born for his use —to live but to obey him."

His hair, black as the raven's wing, was strangely frizzled out to a prodigious size, as if his lordship had wished to imitate the quills of the fretful porcupine, or a large furze-bush in his *chevelure;* yet still the natural propensity it evinced to curl defied the attacks of the *frizeur,* and the innumerable applications of every sort of preparation to make

ses beaux cheveux stand upright, at a great distance from the head they were meant to adorn, in a mighty maze, like a worn-out mop.

At this moment his lip was wreathed in a contemptuous sneer, and his arched eyebrows slightly, almost imperceptibly, elevated, as if to express the same feeling.

"Well, lord Frederic Beauchief," coolly remarked lady Rosvellyn, "as you deign not to inquire after my health, I presume you think, as well as your cousin, lord Ashbourne, that civility to me is *hors du question.* In the present age, indeed, duty is a word never mentioned, never spoken of, never dreamt of, never thought of, except to give a title to a novel, which reminds us, that once, in the days of our grandmothers, such things were, as respect, and obedience, to one's older relations. How are you? and has your father recovered from his illness—shaken off the gout?"

As

As she spoke she held out her hand to the young nobleman, who kissed it, with an air of feigned humility and mock affection.

" How can I answer all your affectionate and condescending questions," he affectedly exclaimed, " my revered aunt? To the first I reply, that I knew not of Ashbourne's dereliction from duty, and most assuredly do not intend following his steps into the thorny path of disobedience or ill-breeding; to the second I answer, with devoted sentiments of profound gratitude for the kindness which dictated it, that I am well, though tired and hungry; and to the last query, I have the happiness of being able to inform you, that the duke of Knaresborough is recovered from the gout, has thrown away his footstool, discarded his walking-stick, pushed his lounging-chair three-quarters of an inch from the fire, hates Beauchief Abbey, has found out that it is damp and disagreeable, dislikes

 the

the improvements *monsieur mon frere* made there last autumn, and passes his days at present, *en philosophe et en sage*, in his library, which is, by-the-bye, the most dismal apartment in the world. The life indeed of the noble peer resembles, in sameness, Henri Quatre's supper of hens—*poulets à la broche, poulets en ragouts, poulets en hachis, poulets en fricasées*—books here, books there, books everywhere, all too of the same dry sort, differing merely in the binding. History alone occupies my venerable father's time, ruins his eyes, and makes him rude and growling, when interrupted in his studies, as a particular species of devouring and shaggy-hided animal, which dwelleth near the north pole, and is yclept a bear."

"A bear and a monkey," rejoined lady Rosvellyn, "residing together must be admirably suited to each other; not that I mean to countenance your abominably-undutiful behaviour, Frederic,

in

in thus designating your father; but really your own resemblance *à mon singe Jacquot*, increases daily with your increasing years."

"Especially in face and figure," returned her self-satisfied nephew, settling his cravat, and shaking back his frizzled locks. "But where is Ashbourne? or rather what has happened to *mon pauvre ami?* for I saw his lordship on horseback, at a little distance from Audleyhurst, and essayed to make him hear my voice, and join me. I called—I screamed—I bellowed—I hallooed after him in vain; the noble Howard, rendered either deaf or stupid by the coldness of the atmosphere, returned not a single syllable to my repeated and affectionate queries of—'How are you? whence come you? are you deaf? Glad to see you at least. Whither go you? Are you performing a penance, turned Catholic, or entered into the monastery of La Trappe?' Instead of answering,

lord Ashbourne pursued his journey, with a gravity of demeanour, and an impenetrable silence, that establish *senza dubbio* my opinion of his becoming a Trappist. Imagine my astonishment at this whimsical and singular behaviour. After all, it is but fair to conclude that he is turned chevalier errant, and intends going about, the picture of woe, speechless and solemn, determined, as that in these enlightened days few men engage in single combat without a cause, to enrage and awake the sleeping ire of every person he passes, by taking 'no note of time but from its loss,' and with a disdainful air never answering the questions his friends put to him. Perhaps though he is a second Astolfo, going in search of somebody's wits—or rather two of his own five senses."

"He went, undutiful boy, out riding," said lady Rosvellyn, "on purpose to teaze me."

"*C'est inconcevable!*" cried lord Frederic.

deric. "Do you remember when Timon of Athens asked his parasitical friends to dinner, he set before them dishes of cold water? Really, my dear aunt, to own the truth, Ashbourne's behaviour, as well as yours, resembles the misanthrope's amazingly — you invited me, with warmth and cordiality, to spend a month at Audleyhurst, assured me of your wish to render my *séjour* here agreeable, and now I am arrived, you both treat me with a coolness bordering on dislike and contempt; one rides off at full gallop, without uttering a syllable—the other sits with an empty glass before her, as if to increase the miseries I now endure from hunger and thirst, and offers me nothing to eat or drink, though I have ridden fifty miles to be blessed with a sight of her averted face."

"Ring the bell, my dear, can't you?" said the indolent lady Rosvellyn, without offering to do so herself, though she was sitting close beside it; and while

he

he obeyed her commands, she proceeded to inform lord Frederic that the glass on the sofa-table had once been filled with ether, which the shattered state of her nerves obliged her frequently to swallow.

"Vastly sorry to hear you are so etherial," he remarked; "I am afraid you will shortly find this lower region of ours, the earth, too confined, too small, to breathe, to exist in, and will soon, through ether, mount to heaven. Seriously, I am convinced you will kill yourself with this noisome medicine."

"Well," returned his peevish aunt, "I am sure I do not wish to live much longer in this world of misery; I believe few people can imagine how wretchedly ill and unhappy I am."

"Death is a fearful thing," said lord Frederic.

"And I am sure life a hateful," returned lady Rosvellyn, rubbing her temples with some eau de Cologne.

"Aye,

"Aye, but to die, and go we know not where—
To lie in cold obstruction, and to rot—
This sensible warm motion, to become
A kneaded clod, and the delighted spirit
To bathe in fiery floods,"

Lord Frederic exclaimed, in a theatrical tone, and was going to finish Claudio's speech, when his eye caught a glimpse of a young lady, who, standing at a little distance, was regarding him with evident marks of surprise and undisguised amusement. With a start worthy of the "heroes of the buskin" he imitated, the young nobleman concluded his harangue, and flew to greet Miss Waldegrave, with an *empressement* that plainly evinced the sincerity of his pleasure.

Georgiana Waldegrave was not beautiful, as her features were far from being regular, but her air was fashionable, easy, and commanding; her address was insinuating, and her countenance one of deep, rapid, and varied expression. At one

one moment, her eyes would almost overpower the beholder with their dazzling brilliancy; at another, they irresistibly attracted him by their mild, soft, and benignant lustre. At one moment she appeared melancholy and dejected; at another, gay, animated, and playful. In an instant, her features would change from an angry, contemptuous, satirical expression, to one of angelic sweetness, gentleness, and affection. Did her mind thus vary, thus change, from

"Grave to gay,
From lively to severe,"

like the alternate showers and sunshine of an April day? It is to be hoped, that whatever Proteus forms her countenance might assume, the mind of so lovely and talented a being was as "wax to receive" good impressions, and "marble to retain" them.

CHAP.

CHAPTER II.

> Vociferated logic kills me quite;
> A noisy man is always in the right. COWPER.

"MY dear Caroline, to oblige you," said sir Gower Fitzormond to his wife, as he seated himself by her side in their travelling-carriage, "I have undertaken this long, freezing, and most disagreeable journey—disagreeable to me in every point of view; I hate thinking of leaving home, I hate leaving it, I hate travelling, I hate sleeping at an inn, and still more do I hate being mewed up, like an imprisoned bird, at Audley-hurst. What's this?" continued he, kicking away, as he spoke, an enormously-

large

large gilt parrot-cage, which a servant had just put into the carriage, "what's this piece of heavy lumber, sir? and why did you push it against my gouty foot, you awkward blockhead, hey?"

"My lady's Poll, sir Gower."

"Well, place it farther off, and, to please lady Caroline, I will endure the screams of Miss Poll, and the disgusting smell of her food.—In the name of all that is horrible, what is this mahogany chest put under the seat for? Grant me patience, Caroline! do you imagine I can remain quietly, to be buried alive under all this trumpery, like a stuffed animal in a museum?"

"My dressing-box, my love," said his wife, in a conciliating tone.

"Oh, my lady," screamed a waiting-gentlewoman, running at full speed through the hall, "here's your ladyship's bandbox, with the new lace cap from madame Chopand's. I'll put it between you and sir Gower, my lady."

As

As she said this, she clapped it, with no gentle hand, on her master's knee.

"May the earth open to receive you, and the devil fly away with your d—d bandbox!" shouted the indignant sir Gower, throwing it in the damsel's face, as she retreated hastily into the house. Then, half sorry and ashamed at his violent behaviour and childish pettishness, he threw himself back on the seat, and, with a countenance full of suppressed ire and inconceivable unutterable woe, "screwed his courage to the sticking-place," with the outward appearance, if not the inward patience of a martyr, and for several minutes maintained a resolute silence, while lady Caroline stowed this little parcel here, and thrust this very, very diminutive box there; and this huge music-stand made him put his feet upon, and this china jar hold in his hand.—"I had better," thought his wife, "take advantage of this quiet moment, and get as many

trunks

trunks into the carriage as possible; this calm will probably be of short duration, and indubitably will be followed by a lengthened storm."

Her prediction was quickly verified, for their little boy George jumping in, and settling himself on his father's lap, began to teaze the parrot, as is the custom of rude, troublesome children, of five or six years of age; and Miss Poll, not much relishing the tricks of the young gentleman, bit his fingers violently as he approached them too near the cage, on purpose to enrage the angry bird.

The boy roared, the nurse screamed, the parrot chattered, lady Caroline alternately soothed the terrified child and his noisy attendant, holding up her finger at the same time to awe Poll into silence, while sir Gower's voice, loud as a trumpet with a Jew's harp sound, burst like thunder on the ear, exclaiming—"Take away that abominable, that detestable

detestable bird; my boy's hand is half off. —You're treading on my foot, you old screech-owl," to the nurse, who had clumsily pushed a box against it.—" Lady Caroline, all your multiplied parcels are falling into the mud.—Don't cry, my dear George; whimpering can't cure you. The parrot, however, shall have its neck wrung off to content you; so get out now, my fine fellow, with Mrs. Conway; send for a postchaise from ——, and follow your mother and myself, as fast as you can. I can't bear this noise; it is louder than the cannon at Waterloo."

At length the enraged baronet triumphed over all his tormentors. The bird was left behind; George and his nurse placed in a postchaise; half of the innumerable trunks and boxes put into it; and the carriage drove off over a country nearly buried in snow, and encrusted with ice.

Lady Caroline, well aware that her husband's dislike to travelling at any time

time of the year was extreme, and that now his only inducement for undertaking in winter a journey to Audley-hurst, was to please her, thought it right, wise, and prudent, to abstain from making any observations on the clouded brow, sneering lip, and occasional pshaws and humphs of poor sir Gower, who, arrayed in a dreadnought great-coat, and sundry other articles of heavy wearing-apparel, had leant his head on the side of the carriage, hopelessly trying to compose himself to rest; but this, though a desirable, was by no means a probable event. It was indeed —"a consummation devoutly to be wished," but nevertheless nearly an impossibility: the frost had rendered the roads dreadfully rough, the snow and ice unequal, almost impassable, so that every instant his head was bumped up and down, with a force and velocity resembling that of a hammer when put in requisition.

At

At last sir Gower made some fretful remark on the badness of the roads, and the severity of the weather, to which his wife replied, in the most mellifluous and silver accents—"Your complaints of the way, however well founded I own they are, I really wonder hearing proceed from your lips, my love, as you assuredly must have forgotten that the immense stones over which it is our hard lot to pass, would not have been strewn in our path, had you adopted last spring the excellent plan of Mr. M'Adams for breaking them."

"That jolt," murmured sir Gower, "has dislocated my shoulder, and broken my head in two."

"I suppose," coolly remarked lady Caroline, raising her eyeglass at the same time to look out of the window, "that the carriage was going over one of those remarkably-large high stones in the way, resembling in size the gigantic ones in Wiltshire. Will you let down

down the window on your left hand or the one opposite? the smell of the blacking on your boots is really too horrid to endure."

"What, you want to let in a little snow, do you? You have a fancy for a severe fit of the rheumatism, or a good snow-bath, possibly."

"Snow, my dear, it is only sleet. How many more times am I to tell you so?" retorted his wife.

"A great many more times before I shall believe you, my love. Do you think my eyes are so weak I cannot see that flake was as big as the top of my little finger?"

"Your finger, sir Gower, must then have dwindled within this half-hour to the size of an infant's, or rather your powers of imagination must have magnified amazingly."

"It is ridiculous in you, I must say, lady Caroline, to declare you are warm," cried sir Gower, as his wife, after a short

pause,

pause, asserted she was not cold, "when you look so frozen, your complexion all colours, and, like harlequin's jacket, variegated with white, red, yellow, green, sky-blue, and purple; and it is not a great proof of the heat of the weather its snowing so, I should think. Well, it is no use to argue; you will have the last word; and to please, and induce you to be silent, I will say this is sleet, not snow; that what looks so white on the ground is only dew; and will also protest that it is warm, uncommonly warm weather, so hot indeed, that I must take off my great-coat, hat, gloves, and neckcloth; but in return for my sacrificing my own well-founded opinion, to adopt your nonsensical one, and to prove you are uncomfortably warm, I must insist on your discarding your pelisse, opening the window near you, and throwing the fur basket you disinterestedly appropriate to your own use out of it."

 "Ah,

"Ah, my dear sir Gower," rejoined lady Caroline, "your drollery and sharpness of wit can always make the opinions of those who differ from you appear ridiculous, so ridiculous indeed, that I must beg you to rein in your satire, and let us endeavour, now we have set out on our journey, to make the best of whatever weather God pleases to send us."

"I should not mind the cold, Caroline, if at the end of our comfortless and miserable expedition, we should be certain of a kind welcome, a blazing fire, and a circle of happy, good-humoured faces round it; but none of these comforts shall we have—a fretful question or two from lady Rosvellyn, sour answers to your affectionate queries, a Swedish stove in the eating-room, and a set of quiet, namby-pamby, stupid, subdued-looking people, a hundred yards from it. These are the miseries we shall find; these the discomforts ex-

changed

changed for the tranquillity and domestic happiness of our own dear Dalberry Park."

"But, my dear sir Gower," said lady Caroline, "will not the pleasures, the enjoyments, of that home, appear doubly delightful to us, after the ennui of Audleyhurst? and the thought alone of having done my duty, by endeavouring to cheer the gloom and wretchedness of my mother's life, will make me happier, and also unspeakably grateful for your kindness in allowing me to follow the bent of my inclination. You know likewise that our dear Howard is going abroad in a few weeks, and of course that is another powerful inducement to spend some time with him, previous to his departure from England."

"As your brother is determined to go to Italy, let us then," added sir Gower, "take Julia Rivers back with us to Dalberry Park: you are aware of lady Rosvellyn's unaccountable peevish-

 ness,

ness, which is enough to wear the health and spirits of a young person to death."

"Most willingly," returned his amiable wife, "will I take Julia home with us. My brother informed me of her decided rejection of him. He thought the refusal prompted by indifference—I saw it proceeded from a higher motive—duty. She is convinced of the utter impossibility of my father's ever viewing in a favourable light his son's marriage with a portionless, though a lovely and excellent girl; and to prevent being the cause of family disunion, she has rejected the man who, of all others, she esteems most highly."

The conversation was here suddenly put a stop to by their arrival at the inn where they were to change horses; and while sir Gower Fitzormond is, with the characteristic violence and impetuosity of the sons of the Emerald Isle, pouring forth a torrent of reproaches on the head of the dismayed

innkeeper,

innkeeper, for not having finer horses, we will give a slight sketch of the family at Audleyhurst, whither they were going.

Lady Rosvellyn was the daughter and coheiress of a nobleman of high rank and splendid fortune, who was too deeply engaged in public life to watch over, or care much about, the employments or dispositions of his motherless children. Naturally of a weak feeble character, and peevish discontented disposition, his youngest child, lady Caroline de Lisle's original follies and vices became more deeply rooted in her heart, by a bad and ill-conducted education. Well indeed may the human mind be compared to a garden, which neglected brings forth a variety of noxious weeds, that quickly spread and hide the flowers which with a little culture would have adorned and embellished its precincts. She was beautiful as well as rich; consequently, on her first entrance

 into

into the world of fashion, lady Caroline was the object of almost universal adulation; and as the only way to her favour was by the smooth flowery path of flattery, the polished, agreeable, though dissipated and deceitful, earl of Rosvellyn, soon persuaded the fair heiress to bestow her hand and fortune upon him.

After a few years, they mutually discovered, what many people have before and after them, that they were paired, not matched, and agreed on a separation, which report said was the only point on which the sentiments of the countess ever coincided with those of her lord.

After this event, lady Rosvellyn resided almost constantly at Audleyhurst, a fine old seat she inherited from her forefathers, and which had, in former days, been the scene of her frivolous pleasures, as it was now of her unfounded miseries. She had two children: her daughter had long been united to a worthy man of large property in the

north

north of Ireland, and was the happy mother of three lovely infants. Sweet-tempered and pleasing, lady Caroline Fitzormond was in manners, disposition, and character, the exact reverse of lady Rosvellyn; one, by her wayward fretfulness and continued complaints, excited contempt; the other, by her good-nature and gentleness, won affection.

Lord Ashbourne was, in every respect, what an English nobleman ought to be. He was a dutiful son, a kind master, an affectionate brother, and an attentive landholder. Early thrown on a world replete with temptations to all, but more particularly to the noble and the affluent, like gold rendered brighter and purer by fire, lord Ashbourne's virtues became more conspicuous, by long acquaintance with that elevated sphere of life in which he was destined to move. In short, he was every thing the fondest parent could wish. But lady Rosvellyn formed one of that numerous

class of people, who regard their sorrows through a magnifying, and their comforts through a diminishing glass; who obstinately shut their eyes to the joys of their lot, and industriously fix them on their afflictions. Indeed, she contrived to draw trouble out of her very blessings; she was an anxious, but not an affectionate mother, always miserable if her children looked unhappy, yet continually trying to make them so.

Julia Rivers was an orphan, and a poor and nearly friendless one: young in years, but old in grief, she was the child, the nursling of adversity, and yet possessing a spring, an elasticity of soul, that repelled the attacks of despondency, and preserved a naturally strong and energetic mind free from the benumbing effects of too-greatly-indulged sorrow.

Lord and lady Rosvellyn had, in an hour of peculiar affliction, shewn her no common kindness, and Julia's heart was

one

one which never forgot a benefit, or ceased to shew her grateful remembrance of it: lord Ashbourne, whose virtues and talents were of the highest order, had offered her his hand, and well aware that now was the time to prove the sincerity of her professions of grateful affection and attachment to her benefactors, she magnanimously resolved to assume an appearance of indifference towards the being whose sentiments of esteem she herself participated in.

The word "magnanimous," perhaps, might appear to many not aptly chosen, but I appeal to the heart of every woman, especially to the younger part of the sex, whether it was not a magnanimous action of a friendless, poor, and unprotected orphan, to refuse a man of wealth, high rank, and exalted talents, and the very person on whom all her fondest affections had been, and still were, fixed.

In the ordinary course of human

events, few women are called to greater trials than the following: viz. to see their earliest and long-tried friends fall around them like the leaves of autumn, to feel the stings of poverty, to be despised by the very world they were once told they should adorn, to be dependent on the bounty of others, and, lastly, to be obliged, from motives of gratitude, prudence, or duty, to repress all the softer emotions of the heart, and affect an indifference foreign to the soul towards the only being still left of all they once had loved, to be the cause of sorrow, instead of the giver of happiness to them.

And all these trials had Julia endured, and all these multiplied afflictions suffered, with a heart torn indeed by conflicting emotions, but a mind and purpose firm and unshaken; for she knew that no permanent joy can be obtained, no real pleasure enjoyed, without first fulfilling the claims of duty: no

no one indeed can be completely miserable, when conscious he acts up to his sense of right; and no one decidedly happy, with the feeling of having done wrong.

CHAPTER III.

"Le talent de parler tient le premier rang dans l'art de plaire." J. J. ROUSSEAU.

"Do you think, Miss Waldegrave, sir Gower Fitzormond and Caroline will be here to dinner?" asked lady Rosvellyn, who was seated at the breakfast-table at Audleyhurst, with a variety of people assembled there: "for my own part, anxious as I am to see my daughter, I must confess, that, independent of the dread of her catching cold in this severe

weather, I look forward with agonized apprehension to the noise of little George; he is a fine handsome boy, certainly, but the weakness of my nerves, and the depressed state of my spirits, render me ill able to bear the rude gambols and boisterous mirth of my naughty, flourishing grandson.

"Oh!" replied Georgiana, smiling, "I am so enthusiastically fond of children, that if he returns in any way the attentions I shall shew him, George will not require any body else's care or trouble; besides, his father and uncle are so dotingly fond of him, that probably you will have more reason to complain of having too little, instead of too much time to play with the little fellow."

"Play with him!" interrupted the countess, with horror and surprise in her features; "I assure you, Miss Waldegrave, I am totally unable to join in his tiresome sports: surely it is misery sufficient to be doomed to hear the noise of a cannon,

a cannon, without putting one's head into the mouth of it; and really sir Gower's manner of playing with his son, as well as Howard's, is so extremely noisy, that if they were to leave the child alone to amuse himself in his own way, it would be far pleasanter to me." After a short pause, she continued— "And then, Fitzormond, depend upon it, my dear, he will be laid up in a fit of the gout; he is never a twelvemonth without it; and he is so impatient, indeed all men are, of a little pain, if he feels but the slightest twinge imaginable, he will be so cross, peevish, fretful, and passionate, I declare the idea of what Caroline and I shall go through makes me shudder."

"No wonder your delicate nerves should absolutely be shaken to pieces at the mere notion of such a thing," murmured lord Frederic Beauchief, putting down a cup of coffee he was in the act of lifting to his lips, with an affected air

of

of pity: "a son-in-law in the gout, a grandson playing puss in the corner, a son aping the manners of six years old, and a daughter distracted between the fits of ill humour which attack her husband, and her own fits of heat and cold occasioned by indisposition, are assuredly enough to destroy you. But really do you think all these terrible disasters will happen? You always look at the dark—let me shew you the bright side of the picture: suppose, my dear aunt, sir Gower Fitzormond's health reestablished by change of air—George out of doors all day, consequently never near you—Ashbourne with him—and lady Caroline, charming, healthy, happy, enlivening you, and by her sweet smiles chasing away the cobwebs of spleen and ennui, which cloud the walls of thy ancient mansion, my most honoured and venerable, lovely and benignant relation."

"If you were not so malapert, my

most

most conceited, absurd, tiresome, and chattering nephew, it would be as well, perhaps," exclaimed lady Rosvellyn.

"La! aunt," rejoined lord Frederic Beauchief, with a comic start of surprise, and assumed vacancy of countenance, "I hope I have not said any thing impertinent. I would have kept silence, had I thought what my tongue, and a long tongue it is too, uttered, had been impertinent or malapert; for I don't mind being impertinent, and am only grieved when my impertinence is out of season, ill received, in short, when my impertinence is not acceptable to those to whom that impertinence is addressed; then I always repent having been impertinent, or at least shewing my impertinence to those who have taken that impertinence amiss."

"Will you ever be silent, and cease to utter all the nonsense contained in those shallow brains, evermore talking without saying any thing worth while to listen to, constantly repeating the

same

same words over and over again?" retorted lady Rosvellyn.

"Don't find fault with me on that account," rejoined her incorrigible nephew; "surely it is better to say impertinent things than tiresome ones; and undoubtedly it is far wiser to say and act impertinence a hundred times over, than to sit with shut mouth, listless air, and muddled intellects, *conjuguer pour toujours la verbe ennuyer*."

As he spoke thus, his eagle eye glanced scornfully on a gentleman, who, with languid negligence and yawning apathy, had reclined his "fashionable length of limb" upon a lounger, thrust as closely as possible to one of the fireplaces, much to the annoyance of every body who wished, at least, to get a sight of its flame, cheered by its pleasing light, if unwarmed by its heat, and with his feet on an ottoman, which lord Frederic had been eyeing wistfully to appropriate to his own use, was sipping his chocolate

with

with an abstracted air of insipid sadness, that would have led strangers to have imagined him under the stunning pressure of some overwhelming grief.

"How shall I charm that coxcomb away from his comfortable lounger, and his still more comfortable ottoman?" whispered the indignant lord Frederic to Miss Waldegrave; "were I to declare the coals here have a strange, a particular propensity to jump red-hot out of the fire, do you think he would move?"

"No, indeed," replied Georgiana; "I rather think no emotion, not even that of fear, '*can shake the settled purpose of his soul*,' or induce him to stir; his only wish is to indulge his indolence, his only aim to avoid exertion, and his only dread to be obliged to exert himself."

"You are wrong, decidedly wrong, my dear Miss Waldegrave; I assure you it is not indolence, but selfishness, that governs that butterfly's mind—no, I have seen him shooting grouse, clambering

bering rocks, driving four-in-hand, riding post the livelong day, and dancing all night; but it is selfishness, pure, unalloyed selfishness, that presides over all his thoughts, prompts all his words, and dictates all his actions—has been his attendant in life, and will be his companion in death. As it is cold, you see the wretch wheels his lounging-chair close to the blazing fire, and bends his long lean body over it, to prevent others from being blessed with even a sight of the flame. Oh!" continued he, after a short pause, in which he seemed engaged in finding opprobrious epithets to heap upon the devoted head of the monopolizer of his ottoman, "if there ever was one person in the world I hated more than another, that I despised more than the worm I trample beneath my foot, it is that honourable dishonour, that busy idler, that seeker of pleasure and finder of satiety, that detestable, frightful, silly, apathetic, abominable, Mr. St. Julians."

"Very

"Very well, my dear lord Frederic, but you need not speak so loud; the object of your anger and disdain will awake like a giant refreshed with sleep, if you speak in so vociferous a manner."

"Oh! Miss Waldegrave," returned he, "do assist me to find a lure to draw that bird from his perch—phœnix of coxcombs, dandies, exquisites, and puppies: oh! could the feelings of hatred, malice, and uncharitableness, which I cherish for thee in my heart's inmost core, have effect, then wouldst thou shortly be enveloped in the smoke of that fire thou lovest with such predilection, and, like the feigned phœnix, expire in flame."

"Are there any other people, besides those already assembled, expected to join our delightful circle?" sneeringly asked Georgiana.

"Lady Hautville is to arrive to-day, or, as I term her, the 'matured enchantress'—the most conceited, over-bearing, ostentatious, weak, silly woman breath-

ing,

ing, or whoever 'made mouths in a glass;' she is vainer than even her beauty warrants, prouder than a princess, more anxious to gain admirers than a general to win a battle, more envious than a shrivelled spinster of sixty-two," more changeable than an April day, and more cold and frigid than a January night; caprice, frivolity, *légèreté*, and coquetry, she imbibed from her French governess; and *hauteur*, airs, ill temper, and conceit, from her parents. She is a rich and handsome widow, so she has many pretended adorers. *Regardez ce petit montre, tournez vos beaux yeux sur son visage, voilà un des meilleurs amis des amans les plus chéris de la belle et charmante veuve.*

"Then the Melfords are also, I fancy, invited—'*The would-be wits, and can't be gentlemen!*' Lady Langham and her fair daughters, of course, will likewise dine here repeatedly. Oh! can't you just imagine her ladyship praising Fanny's

Fanny's drawings and Bella's voice? and in ecstacies of admiration with Lydia's pertness, and Lydia's beauty; it is really quite laughable to behold her little petty manœuvres to attract beaux round her children."

"Yet," cried lord Frederic carelessly, "she always sits with so sour and vinegar an aspect, that, as Beatrice said of Don John, in 'Much ado about Nothing,' she looks so tartly, I never fix my eyes upon her without having the heartburn."

"For my part," pursued the merciless Georgiana, "she puts me in mind of a tired and disappointed angler, who has met with very bad sport from having chosen wrong bait."

"Then colonel Montrath, who has not deigned to honour us with his company at breakfast this morning—what say you of him, Miss Waldegrave?"

"Why," rejoined she smiling, "I think him as good-hearted a being as ever existed; but, poor man! others try

to veil their foibles—he appears to glory in them; others seek to shew their virtues, or at least their talents—he endeavours to conceal his many commendable qualities under the mask of silliness and folly; also his best friends must allow that he has many, many faults; he is a coxcomb from fashion, a gamester from ennui, an idler by profession, and a spendthrift by habit."

"Miss Waldegrave is so penetrating, and so amusingly draws the characters of her most *intimate* acquaintances," (this was said with the gayest air imaginable, with a slight stress on the word intimate), "that I must entreat her to give me the portrait or caricature of that fair-haired, blue-eyed damsel who has just quitted the room."

"I leave Miss Harvey to your lordship's mercy, or rather to your criticisms," said Georgiana.

"No, no, you forget I am a newly-arrived guest at Audleyhurst, and, like

a ship-

a shipwrecked mariner cast on an unknown shore, I am completely dependent upon the goodness and humanity of the inhabitants, for information respecting the *carte du pays.*"

"Well, nature, you see, has been no stepdame to Miss Harvey in outward appearance, but apparently, in decorating the *déhors,* has totally forgotten to furnish the *dédans;* she is like a pretty casket, which, newly gilt, looks beautiful to the eye, but contains no jewel within; folly, her inconceivable, unutterable folly, is to be pitied, not condemned; but, added to this incurable disease of the *mind,* she has many of the *heart,* such as a mean despicable envy, and an ungovernably-violent temper; vain and self-conceited, she is not only miserable if another's loveliness is preferred to hers, but is also extremely anxious to gain the reputation of a *bas-bleu;* she thinks herself, poor deluded girl! a wonder of the world, a miracle of wit, an oracle of wisdom,

wisdom, a Minerva, as well as a grace; and as the fair trifler has money, busy flatterers swarm about her golden hive, to endeavour to make her bestow the honey of her smiles, or rather the gold of her coffers, on them."

"I am glad," exclaimed lord Frederic, "that the idea I had formed of this lady proves to have been a correct one. I thought her accomplishments were exclusively to exhibit vamped-up-like furniture for sale at an auction, false as the imitations of jewels worn by strolling players; for, after hearing her quote passages from Tasso and Schiller, I spoke a few words of Italian, and a simple sentence in German to her, and she did not understand me. She certainly is like the doll she has probably just left off playing with; *elle a un joli visage sans expression, et un tête sans de l'esprit*; or rather resembles a pirate under glaringly-false colours, she assumes the appearance of a vessel with rich merchandize

dize on board, whereas, in reality, she is merely on the watch to take from the stores of strangers; for, without talents herself, she tries to detract from the merits of others, and is likewise a receiver of stolen goods. Did you not remark this morning, how she told second-hand laughable anecdotes, and deprived them of their drollery by repeating them badly, *comme des nouvelle nouvelles?*"

"All giggle, blush, half pertness and half pout, such is Miss Harvey," returned Georgiana; "she resembles, my lord, an *ignis fatuus,* which in a dark night is for a moment mistaken for a light from a window, but is quickly found to proceed from a bog."

"Shall you ride this morning, Beauchief?" languidly murmured Mr. St. Julians, approaching the *chaise longue* occupied by lord Frederic and Miss Waldegrave.

"*Assurément, il faut que je m'en vais promener mon ennui ailleurs,*" returned

 the

the young nobleman, starting up impatiently, and ringing the bell violently for his horse.

"Ride, shall you?—I shall stay and read Beppo;" and walking slowly back again to his lounger, Mr. St. Julians, after stretching and yawning, took up and opened a sermon book, instead of the entertaining poem he intended to amuse himself with perusing; he turned over the grave pages of Blair for some time, then shut it, and looked fixedly at the binding, till his eyes closed, his hand relaxed its grasp, and, just as sleep had "steeped his senses in oblivion's balm," the poor coxcomb was awoke by the noise of his composing volume dropping on the ground.

"And Folly took old Reason's book," sung Georgiana archly; then added in a low voice, "I should like 'to twist its leaves in a cap' well known, which often, in his earlier years, I dare say, was placed on the head of Mr. St. Julians by the

hands,

hands, not of beauty, but of a schoolmaster, who doubtless then thought him 'a mark for scorn to point his finger at.' Oh, how ridiculous it would be to observe, instead of his father's coronet encircling his baby brow, the tattered remnants of his own fool's cap! But the phœnix is again rising from his chair—lady Rosvellyn is retired to write, or rather scrawl, doleful ditties to her unhappy correspondents—lord Ashbourne is reading—you are fatigued with listening probably, and I am sure I am with talking so. *Adio* till the tiresome half-hour before dinner. Remember, however," continued she, playfully smiling as she retreated, "I expect your conversation will enliven even those leaden minutes."

As Miss Waldegrave left the room, sir Lionel Wentworth was announced; a farther account of whom we must defer giving till the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

An honest man's the noblest work of God. POPE.

SIR Lionel Wentworth was a baronet of large property and ancient family in one of the midland counties of England; grave, taciturn, and reserved, his manners were far from indicating the many great, noble, and attaching qualities, which rendered him, to the few favoured beings in whom he centered all the affections of a warm heart and an exalted mind, the sympathizing friend, the firm and steady adviser, and the pleasing companion. Early misfortunes had, while they softened the asperities, and curbed the vehemence of a temper naturally too

too lively and enthusiastic, given him habits of melancholy reflection, and destroyed too soon the ardent aspirations of youth, after fame, honour, or happiness; whilst the gloomy dejection and cold gravity of his manners made him rather dreaded and shunned by the gay, as a discontented man, and his society disliked, as that of a misanthrope, than courted because he was a good, sensible, and intellectual person.

His father, sir James, whose disposition was harsh, vindictive, and severe, was one of those strange unaccountable beings, who, while they profess never to forgive an enemy, treat their "friends as if one day they were to become such;" and lady Wentworth, several years his junior, feeling her neck galled by the matrimonial harness, gay, dissipated, a vain coquette, a heartless wife, and a careless mother, when sir Lionel had attained his thirteenth year, eloped from her husband, with one for whose sake

 she

she gave up that world of fashion whose precepts had at first misled, and whose homage was still so dear to her heart.

Sir James lived many years after the desertion of his wife, and the remainder of his days were clouded over with the darkest affliction. His daughter, whom he loved with predilection, yet still treated with unmeaning severity, in the bloom of youth and beauty, sunk into an untimely grave; and the wretched father, whilst he dropped the tear of parental anguish over the deathbed of his darling child, felt, in addition to his regret at losing her, the torments of that fire which never can be quenched; for his conscience whispered that he had embittered and rendered unhappy the short life of the gentle and lovely Florence, by his violence of temper, and the unkindness of his behaviour.

Never let us allow ourselves to say we are too old to correct the vices of our character; it is *never* too late to amend our

our lives, and become religious men. Our Saviour himself has declared, "there is more joy over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety-and-nine just men who need no repentance."

Sir James was schooled by adversity; the asperity of his disposition was buried in the tomb of his unfortunate daughter, and he lived to send his forgiveness to his dying and guilty wife.

Shortly after the demise of his father, sir Lionel Wentworth, whose estates were contiguous to those Mr. Waldegrave had purchased in ——shire, became acquainted with that gentleman's daughter. In the country, a casual acquaintance often quickly becomes a friend, as the great freedom of intercourse generally established there, commonly occasions an unavoidable degree of intimacy between two near neighbours. It was hardly possible to be within the sphere of Georgiana's influence anywhere, without being enchanted by her varied talents

 and

and bewitching vivacity; and in a place so secluded as the spot in which sir Lionel first met her, the polished ease of her manners, and the shrewd originality of her conversation, were rendered doubly attractive by being unlooked for.

How true is the remark, that the grave frequently prefer the gay and light-hearted to those people whose characters more nearly resemble their own—that the reflecting admire the giddy; the wise, the negligent! Sir Lionel Wentworth certainly exemplified the truth of this observation, by becoming the lover of his fair capricious neighbour. Though shy, proud, and sensitive, he had never summoned resolution to tell Miss Waldegrave of his affection, lest he should endure the mortification of a decided refusal; but independent of this cause for hesitation, there was one still more weighty, that induced him, for some time at least, to keep his sentiments undisclosed, for love had not so completely

blinded

blinded sir Lionel's penetration as to prevent him from seeing a multiplicity of faults in the object of his attachment, and more especially a certain proneness to satire, and a levity of conduct too glaring even for him to pass unnoticed.

Georgiana was an only child, and heedless, impetuous, and giddy: the inherent follies, more than vices, of her nature, were encouraged, rather than checked, by the fond indulgence of her father, who, though a very good, was indubitably a very weak man. Often indeed did Mr. Waldegrave smile, and was amused at the foibles of his darling's character, when he ought most severely to have reprehended, and endeavoured to correct them. Thus, while sir Lionel condemned Georgiana's conduct, he could not avoid pitying the guileless imprudence which prompted it, and was rather apt to imagine her coquetry proceeded from an overstrained gaiety and an innocent *étourderie* of disposition,

than to trace it to its true source—a craving love for admiration.

How great was the contrast between Miss Waldegrave and the exemplary Julia Rivers! one, in a vain pursuit of pleasure, was almost indifferent as to the means of accomplishing the attainment of it; the other, to fulfil the claims of duty, sacrificed her last poor remains of happiness—one, with every means of worldly joy, was restless and dissatisfied; the other, laden with sorrows of every description, was resigned, tranquil, serene, and even happy.

CHAP-

CHAPTER V.

Le ton de la bonne conversation est coulant et naturel; il n'est ni pesant ni frivole; gai sans tumulte, poli sans affectation, galant sans fadeur.

J. J. ROUSSEAU.

"MISS Waldegrave," exclaimed lord Frederic Beauchief, advancing to meet that young lady, as she entered the splendid drawing-rooms of his aunt, where a large assemblage of people were gathered together, engaged in endeavouring to wile away the tiresome half-hour before dinner, "there is lady Rosvellyn, miserable, sick, fretful, and complaining; here is lady Caroline Fitzormond, lazy, yawning, though smiling; here is sir Gower, angry, fidgetty

 cold,

cold, and hungry; here is George, roaring, dancing, screaming, laughing with delight; and though last, not least, here is Ashbourne, sad, and sympathizing with his mother, as in duty bound, cheerful and amusing with his sister, caressing and playing with his nephew, and listening to the complaints, and softening the anger, of his enraged brother-in-law, who, poor man! has, I understand, been obliged to leave his own comfortable dwelling in winter, to come to a place he wished to stay away from."

"I should as soon," returned Georgiana, "have expected a dormouse to leave its nest in winter, as sir Gower to have quitted his *palais de la vérité* in a snow-storm."

"Why do you call Dalberry Park the Palace of Truth? For my own part, I am always tempted to denominate it the Ogre's Castle," cried lord Frederic.

"I call it *le palais de la vérité*, my lord, because the most disagreeable truths

are

are constantly spoken there; indeed, I have frequently heard as strange things uttered by its owner, as the courtier in that admirable tale of madame de Genlis said to his mistress. *Les vérités* are not pronounced in accents so mild, to be sure."

"Or with bow so graceful, or smile so bewitching," exclaimed lord Frederic, his dark eye resting for an instant on the tall awkward figure of the baronet, who, at that moment, was bowing, and grinning horribly a ghastly smile, in token of recognition to two gentlemen entering the room. One was sir Lionel Wentworth; he looked earnestly at Georgiana, and was approaching, in eager haste, to inquire after her health, with all the freedom their late intimacy warranted, when he was transfixed with astonishment, and unutterably hurt and mortified, by receiving a slight, almost imperceptible movement of the head, which seemed intended to chill and re-

pel

pel all attempts at renewing any sort of conversation. Too proud to wish to speak to one who evidently tried to avoid him, he turned abruptly from her, and seated himself by lady Rosvellyn.

"Ah, here comes," remarked lord Frederic Beauchief, "the admired, the dreaded, heroical coxcomb, colonel Montrath; with what grace he returns the boisterous salutation of his friend! He moves this way. Quick, quick, Miss Waldegrave, or he will join us!"

"I thought," rejoined Georgiana, coolly, "you told me this morning that he was the person you had the sincerest friendship for in the world?"

"Well, and so I have; he is as good a fellow as ever existed, I believe; but his affectation and tiresome ways, that *langueur desœuvrée*, that perpetual egotism, weary me to death. He is always talking of himself as well as thinking. Oh! he is like a snail; for, as that animal carries, wherever it goes, its house along with

with it, Montrath never fails to bring forward, to the mind's eye at least, his mansion every moment."

"Yes, and certainly," pursued the other, "has contrived to imitate the slow crawling movements of the same creature to perfection."

So saying, she, accompanied by lord Frederic, walked into the next room, to make observations on the people assembled there.

The company were divided into groups: the first cluster consisted of an old lady, of a cross and shrivelled aspect, who was no other than the identical lady Langham Miss Waldegrave had been so unmercifully criticising in the morning; two others, of nearly the same age, but borrowing from the rouge-pot the bloom, and aping the manners of twenty-one; and several other young females, engaged in tittering, smiling, talking, whispering, and "looking delightfully with all their might," endeavouring

vouring to draw into their circle a party of gentlemen, at a little distance, who were standing engaged in speaking of horses, grouse-shooting, an illustrious personage, and an accomplished cook. One of these cavaliers was a handsome coxcomb, with a head better furnished with hair on the outside than brains in the interior; another, who, because he had a fine set of teeth, was always laughing, to accomplish the laudable end of shewing them; the third affected an air of profound wisdom and philosophical abstraction; and the attention of the fourth was wholly engrossed by a music-book he held in his hand, sometimes casting his eyes to heaven, keeping time with his feet, and occasionally murmuring out a dying cadence or two of "*Tu che accendi.*" Any body who looked at his affected *minauderies* would have imagined him to have been a public singer, anxious to charm the company with a display of his vocal powers.

Lady

Lady Hautville was sitting in a studiously-graceful attitude upon a Grecian scroll, receiving the incense of flattery offered to her acceptance by Mr. St. Julians, who, seated on an ottoman at her feet, brandishing a snuff-box in his white hand, "with whose contents he ever and anon regaled his nose," seemed to divide his attentions between himself and his fair companion, the beauty of his own gold and jewelled snuff-box, and the brilliancy and softness of lady Hautville's eyes.

"I am really surprised, lord Frederic," said Miss Waldegrave, "to find the matured enchantress and her adorer, *la belle et la bête*, have left their respective dressing-rooms; they have only been adoring, with head uncovered, the cosmetic powers for the short space of two hours and a half. I should have thought the attendant priestess could hardly have decorated the toilet or altar of the goddess of vanity and folly in

in that time; consider how much pains it must have cost, how much trouble have been taken, to hide the ravages of the old man with the scythe—rouge and white paint require some time to lay on becomingly—jewels to be attached in the most conspicuous manner, false hair to be curled in natural ringlets, the most delicate colours for the complexion to choose, and lastly, whether the robe of to-day shall be either with folds majestic, queenlike folds, streaming in graceful negligence around her form, or with scanty drapery, as a child's frock? All these high and weighty matters to decide, surely require much consideration, and still more time to settle satisfactorily."

"But look, Miss Waldegrave, I implore you, at the 'poor puny insect, shivering at a breeze,' at her ladyship's feet—that fly—I wish I could say that ephemera, for then one day would end his useless existence—look at him, and observe

observe the self-satisfied glances he casts at the mirror opposite."

"It is a pity," cried Julia Rivers, approaching, "that you have not in your possession the Chinese philosopher's looking-glass; for, as a moth would fly to a candle, Mr. St. Julians would be attracted to it, and certainly, when he witnessed his own hideous physiognomy, the poor coxcomb would expire with alarm and dismay."

"I wish, Miss Rivers," said sir Lionel Wentworth, coolly, "I had that telescope of the mind in my hands now; it would be a highly-interesting employment for some people, particularly those addicted to curiosity, or attracted by novelty, to read entirely through the strange motives of their friends unaccountable conduct, to penetrate the remotest recesses of that labyrinth—the human mind, and behold the secret springs which act upon the human heart;

heart; yet it would be, to a person of sensibility, an afflicting sight to mark, upon the countenances of those whose characters were once deemed untarnished by a fault, the slightest blemish."

"But, my dear Julia," hastily interrupted Georgiana, "the mind of Mr. St. Julians is so vacant, nothing would be reflected on the mirror—he thinks of nothing; consequently a bare space would be presented to his view."

"If it could be allowed, however," rejoined Miss Rivers, smiling, "for this gentleman's bosom to be of rock crystal, as Aurelia's, in the Spectator, is represented to be, assuredly we should have the satisfaction of seeing one subject occupy his thoughts; it would be *le désir de briller*."

"Pardon me," returned the other young lady, "when I affirm, that nothing should we see but self, self, self, self; we should look on a hundred

miniatures

miniatures of Mr. St. Julians, some riding, some dressing, some dancing, some flirting."

"Oh! do not talk of it, dearest Miss Waldegrave; I cannot even endure to hear you mention such a thing; to see one of such a species of nobody, is too much to suffer without a sigh. Heavens! the bare idea of beholding herds of such an animal, such a worm, such an insect, such a block (for he looks like one, barbers dress hair upon), such a doll, such a butterfly, makes me tremble, fret, fume, and bemoan my hard fate, with as much earnestness of expression as my poor aunt did when a China jar was broken yesterday."

As lord Frederick ended, dinner was announced; but not even the necessity of helping people to the dishes next him, or the occupation of eating, could stop the eternal flow of words which issued from his mouth, like a rapid and never-failing stream.

"Mr. St. Julians has dropped his diamond ring on the ground," said Miss Harvey; "I am really afraid he will either kill himself, or crack his stays, in stooping to recover it. Only look, lord Frederic, how red in the face he is!"

"Is he? I care not for the phœnix," pettishly exclaimed he. "I am so tired of thinking, or speaking of, and looking at, the tiresome nonentity, I declare now I am really sorry that tureen is removed, as I cannot avoid seeing his disagreeable little phiz."

——— ——— "Detested coxcomb!
Indeed the top of detestation, worth
What's meanest in the world. Full many a puppy
I have eyed with rancorous hate, and many a time
The squeaking of their voices hath into sneering
Wreathed my too-willing lip; for several foibles
Have I scorn'd several persons—never any
With so full soul, but some veil'd good in them
Did set off every folly that they owed,
And put it in the shade; but him! oh him!
So silly, and so smiling, is created
Of every creature worst!"

said

said Georgiana, with animation; and lord Frederic was so wholly engrossed for some moments in admiring the beauty of her expressive features, as she recited this parody, in a voice, the tones of which were rich, varied, and mellifluous as the nightingale's, that he totally forgot to lay the "flattering unction" of praise to her soul, by adroitly complimenting the powers she possessed of conversation.

"Lord Frederic Beauchief," said Miss Harvey, "will you tell me now who that gentleman is opposite?"

"I am perfectly unacquainted with him," returned he, "but, from the *gaucherie* of his deportment, I should take him to be a fit subject for one of your slight, exquisitely-touched, spirited, inimitable sketches," continued he, turning to Miss Waldegrave.

"Whose caricature, my lord, do you seem, by that supplicating look, to invite me to draw? Oh, I see, Mr. Wintōn's;

ton's; and lest you should mistake that solemn, grave, abstracted air, which he assumes as a cloak to hide his folly in, for the effect of deep thinking, I will accede to your wishes, and give a slight sketch of the silly dolt.—He tries to appear to think, yet, in reality, never does; he speaks few words, to make people imagine he wishes not to display his multifarious knowledge; by the solemnity of his demeanour, he endeavours to impress on the mind of the beholder of his long lean visage an idea of his being immersed in the sea of politics, (he is the member for ——), whereas, poor man! his thoughts are merely employed in attempting to appear what he is not; in short, my lord, he is one of those men

——————" Whose visages
Do cream and mantle as a standing pool,
And do a wilful stillness entertain,
On purpose to be dressed in an opinion

Of

Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit,
As who should say—I am sir Oracle,
And when I ope my lips, let no dog bark."

"Is that young lady, mamma," said Miss Harvey, in a whisper, "an *improvisatore?* for how many verses she recites!"

"Hush, Augusta!" returned her mother, "do not you know that is a quotation, the other a parody from Shakespeare, and that you should say *improvisatrice* when you speak of a woman?"

"Indeed!" resumed the pert daughter, "then you understand Italian better than I do; and with all the instructions and masters I have had, I should think that barely possible."

"Probably," said the meek mother, "I am more conversant, my love, with the '*lingua Toscana in bocca Romana*' than yourself, having resided many years at Florence; and remember also, that without my consent, you never could

have had any instruction whatever, or any masters at all."

Miss Harvey, instead of listening, turned sullenly away, and asked Miss Waldegrave some trifling question relative to the lady sitting next Mr. Winton.

"Her name is Danby," returned she, "who, rather pretty, is rather accomplished, sings rather well, paints rather well, dances rather well, but does nothing really well."

"Ah, there," cried lord Frederic, smiling, "are my lovely, lively, laughter-loving Langhams, sweet, interesting, *interested* beings, just the number of the Graces; but as they always, pretty dears, try to seize the hearts of every unmarried man who pops in their way, whether old, young, good, bad, wise, silly, pleasant, or disagreeable, I call them the Harpies, which I think a more applicable sobriquet. Ashbourne, are not you acquaint-

ed

ed with their cousin, Mr. Rushbrook? I should humbly deem he is either troubled with the St. Vitus's dance, which often causes a convulsive movement of the mouth, or else that he had a very weak character. Perhaps, however, I may be wrong, and instead of his being a sort of led captain, obliged to find laugh for his patron's no jokes, he may be rich and sensible; pray, inform me?"

"He has a fine estate, undoubtedly, Frederic, and a large funded property; but as to his character, I have known him from my boyhood, and never discovered he had any at all."

"Who said that," cried lord Frederic, "Ashbourne, or a person with a voice similar to his? *Ouais!* known Rushbrook from his boyhood, and never discovered he had any character at all! Why I have been acquainted since the days of pap and swaddling-clothes with my cousin, and never heard him laugh at any body's particularities in my life. This,

my dear Miss Waldegrave," continued he, in a confidential tone, "is the cause of Howard's excessive insipidity in common society; he will not season his conversation with one grain of Attic salt; and without a little of the juice of the lemon, do not you think sugar and water a most vile draught? Thus you see, with wit at will, a vivid imagination, and a large store of every material to make an agreeable man, Ashbourne is far from being one. He has abundance of goodness, loads of talent, oceans of wit, rivers of sense, but never allows himself to make use of any acids, to correct the unvarying gentleness and suavity of temper that give a milk and honey sort of cloying sweetness to his shrewdest remarks. *You* are well aware, that without satire, conversation would be vapid, dull, heavy, and uninteresting; in general, indeed, I suspect that every body who professes a dislike to sarcasm, has a 'head hard as the craigs upon old Scotia's coast,' and brains,

brains, oh, by far to leaden to allow of their being satirical or witty themselves."

"As he is going abroad, perhaps lord Ashbourne may imbibe a spirit of gaiety by mixing with Parisian society."

"Yes, I trust," resumed lord Frederic, "that the high *damas* of Italy, soft as their clime, and sunny as their skies, with the gay coquettes of France, will change his grave, sombre, Novemberish manners (all affectation, I am convinced, for he used to be cheerful) into sprightly amusing ones. Should not you be entertained if he were to fall in love with my friend madame de Monjou, the gayest, liveliest, most volatile creature? You remember her at Milan? Oh, your Englishmen, Miss Waldegrave, may be very amiable, but they are vastly disagreeable; and the French are the most delightfully-wicked race of people. Heigho! dear Paris!—Paris! what did I not suffer when obliged to leave your

 charming

charming societies, where ease, wit, grace, and *bonhommie* reign, to come to this land of mist, to our foggy island, our prison, encircled by sea, where dullness and ennui have dwelt for ever, and whose very atmosphere accords with the melancholy and gloom of those who inhale it! Heigho! with what feelings of despair I sighed out, on quitting Calais—'*Adieu, plaisant pays de France!*'"

"Shall you go into Italy, my dear Howard?" said lady Caroline Fitzormond, catching the last words of her unthinking cousin, "or make some stay at Paris?"

"Oh, of course I shall shape my course towards Rome," replied lord Ashbourne.

"The orphans of the heart must turn to thee,
Lone mother of dead empires, and control
In their shut breasts their petty misery."

As he spoke thus, his eye involuntarily turned towards Julia Rivers, to whom the whole of this conversation had given

exquisite

exquisite pain; but as her heart's inward emotion was not painted on her pale, though calm and lovely countenance, lord Ashbourne felt anew the conviction that his affection was not returned by the object of it.

CHAPTER VI.

Words learned by rote a parrot may rehearse,
But talking is not always to converse. COWPER.

"Do you sing, and do you play? do you draw, or do you valse?" Such were the interesting questions asked by the Miss Langhams, on adjourning to the drawing-rooms, where an immense fire, books of prints, a variety of different games, such as chess, bagatelle, &c. and a large collection of new publica-

 tions,

tions, laid upon the tables; a piano, harp, and other musical instruments, lounging-chairs, ottomans, and sofas, promised a profusion of enjoyments to those assembled in them.

"Here," said Georgiana, gaily, to Miss Rivers, "is a fire for the cold, bagatelle for the idle, prints *pour les connoisseuses*, music for the harmonious, books for the taciturn, the wise, the unknowing or unknown, and every accommodation for the lazy, to sleep, dose, or loll upon. Look at lady Hautville, see how listlessly she reclines her beautiful limbs on yonder sofa; she shuts her eyes, afraid the light will spoil their brilliancy; she never opens her lips, as she is afraid her witty remarks not only will be unheard by the lords of the creation, but because also she is engaged in torturing her brains, and ransacking her memory, for ingenious *naïveté*, bewitching *bons mots*, and elegant flatteries; for she knows full well that Mr. St. Julians

lians will never flatter her, unless she likewise does as she would be done by."

> "What strain is that, now bursting on my ear?
> Ha! can I believe I hear aright,
> And that the lovely Langhams deign to sing,
> Unmindful of the knights below?"

"Do not you perceive Mr. Tudor has joined them," remarked Julia, "and is engaged in recommending Miss Harvey to join in a quartetto?"

"I do," replied Miss Waldegrave; "but though that gentleman has a fine voice, great science, exquisite taste, and is an enthusiastic lover of Scotch, Irish, English, Italian, French, German, Swiss, Welsh, and Russian melodies, yet he is a person the Miss Langhams cannot wish to captivate by a display of their vocal talents, as he is poor; and, oh! believe me, Miss Rivers, that 'none are left to please, when none are left to *give*.'"

Julia turned silently away, and when, on leaving her thoughtless companion

 for

for a few minutes, she took up, and appeared deeply engaged in contemplating a beautiful print of the Crucifixion, the drop that fell upon the face of our Redeemer not even he could condemn, though its source was regret at the loss of worldly fortune; his precepts commanded us indeed to despise every earthly temptation; but the tears of the young, the innocent, and unfortunate, are precious in the eyes of Him who wept over Jerusalem.

"Pray, Miss Rivers," said lady Rosvellyn, unkindly and rudely, "may I trouble you to give that print to Miss Rushbrook, who has been patiently waiting for some time, till you had satisfied yourself with gazing on what you have beheld at least a hundred times before."

Julia handed the print, as desired, and again joined Miss Waldegrave, who immediately exclaimed — "What is lady Langham fidgetting about so

for,

for, taking up her gloves and handkerchief, and then dropping them, asking her daughter Lydia for some *eau du Portugal*, and settling Miss Fanny's necklace? Oh, to be sure she does not like the Graces to shew off their accomplishments, or make their voices hoarse by singing to yawning ladies, one moneyless connoisseur, and senseless chairs, hardly more so, however, than many who loll upon them, till the men of substance appear, and then her fears about her 'sweet Lydia's delicate chest' will give way before the hopes of getting her into the warm salubrious air of Devonshire. Has not colonel Montrath a place there, Miss Rivers?"

At this moment the gallant colonel entered the room, and lady Langham beckoned one of her daughters, who was singing an Irish melody, to desist from pouring forth a strain she remembered hearing him say he had a strong

 aversion

aversion to. Heedless of interrupting the song in its commencement; when she perceived Miss Lydia was too deeply engaged in screaming (in a voice like a cracked bell, yet elevated to the pitch in which "dust, dust, ho!" is cried about the streets of London) the beautiful air of "When he who adores thee," to remark her nods and winks, she began to exclaim, as if endeavouring to drown a great noise by a greater—"My darling love, that song is so high, it will tear your lungs to pieces. Colonel Montrath, there's a good creature, do entreat her to desist from warbling that melancholy strain. Lydia, my sweet child, that window will make you catch cold, for I can plainly see it does not shut closely. Then do, Bella, take away her music-book, as all other expedients fail in inducing her to stop. Sweet love! she is so enthusiastically fond of harmony, when once she begins touching the instrument, she is quite carried away

by

by the fascinations of its tone; indeed I often observe to her sisters, that though they all, I must say, are accomplished musicians, they are far surpassed by Lydia, whose very soul is music."

"Music!" said colonel Montrath, in a whisper to Miss Rivers, "the girl is the goddess of discord."

"Oh, my dear fellow," said lord Frederic, advancing, "you must allow she executes Kalkbrenner's airs wonderfully well."

"She murders them most completely indeed, as she generally leaves out the prelude, or beginning, which is the most difficult part of the whole: she may, with justice, be said to guillotine them," rejoined the colonel, even his indolence giving way to anger at the constant persecuting attention the Langhams shewed him.

At that moment sir William, an inveterately-dull old man, came up, and insisted on discussing some political

news

news of the day, much to the distress of his wife, and disappointment of his children, who wished to appropriate colonel Montrath exclusively to themselves.

Sir William Langham had been a London merchant, and composed one of that numerous class of people who have, like Moliere's Mr. Jourdain, talked prose all their life without knowing it. He was, moreover, always busy, always meddling, at the same time possessing no real energy of character; he often employed, and made himself wretched, about trifles, when he allowed more momentous affairs to pass disregarded. Talkative, *désœuvré*, fidgetty, perpetually imagining mysteries where none existed, and making important secrets of nothing at all, he was always in company employed in watching for whispers, signs, and inuendoes, which in solitude he endeavoured to account for; and by this constant practice of observing, and thinking over, what he observed, he frequently

frequently used to divine secrets, which had merely their origin in his own brains; arrange marriages, the parties never thought of themselves; and lament the disunion of families, who perhaps had never quarrelled. When once he had, in his own fertile imagination, found a plausible reason for Mr. such-a-one's gravity, and Miss other-body's gaiety, he immediately, with a most mysterious and important air, sought out lady Langham, and told her as a certainty things which were always exaggerated by his own heated fancy, and still oftener wholly ideal; at the same time that he imagined he was acquainted with the secret history of every family, the poor man was completely ignorant of the little domestic intrigues which were carried on in his own. In short—

> C'est de la tête au pied un homme tout mystere,
> Qui vous jette en passant un coup d'œil égaré,
> Et sans aucune affaire et toujours affairé."

At

At length colonel Montrath contrived to escape from the tormenting sir William, and his still more disagreeable wife, and seated his tall form upon a settee beside Miss Waldegrave, where it was impossible, without breaking china, throwing down music-stands, books, tables, and chairs, to come near him.

"What have you done with your worshipper?" asked Georgiana, after a short pause; "has she found her deity would not listen to her prayers, grant her supplications, or accept her sacrifice?"

"Oh! lady Langham," rejoined he; "I am rejoiced to say, was called out of the room by one of her numerous progeny; so I stole away, took the trouble of asking the servants to heap as many chairs and things about this sofa, as they conveniently could, because they were clearing away the furniture for a valse for lady Hautville; so I thought a few of the superfluous embellishments of this crowded apartment would act as a battery

battery against the attacks of my fair insidious foe. I don't think," continued the colonel, casting a look of high glee, and soul-felt contentment, around his place of refuge, "she can get near us now, without a pair of wings tacked to her immensely-broad shoulders."

"Ah! here she comes," pursued Georgiana, laughing.

"Her eyes from heaven to earth in a fine frenzy rolling, as if she expected to see you in the clouds, on the carpet, or peradventure concealed under a table."

"Well," languidly murmured the man of war, "I don't know but she will find me in the last-mentioned place some day or other; she bores me so, I would fain escape from listening to the index of all the perfections of the pretty Lydia, the accomplished Bella, and the witty Fanny; the beauty of one I think charmless, the talents of the other groundless, and the remarks of the third senseless; one

is

is insipid, the other tiresome, and the last pert. I always long to say to lady Langham, that if she loves her daughters so much, I wonder she can endure the idea of parting with them; then her voice, is it not shrill as a bagpipe, and as monotonous too? for, would you believe it, she harps all on one string, to the tune of 'The Beautiful Maid?' Besides, I dislike trumpetting heralds; they always seem to announce a battle."

"Are you fearful then of an engagement?" exclaimed Miss Waldegrave, archly; and then smilingly added, "the throbs of your heart told a different tale at Waterloo."

Colonel Montrath had distinguished himself much on the memorable eighteenth of June, and was pleased with the allusion to it.

"And what a fright," resumed he, "she is, that lady Langham! did you ever observe her hands?"

'She

'She has a leathern hand,
A freestone-coloured hand; I verily did think
That her old gloves were on, but 'twas her hands.'

And, colonel Montrath, did not you see lady Hautville, who is anxious to exhibit every one of her personal charms, the moment she saw poor lady Langham display her coarse brown hand on the back of that settee, rise, come to her with an air of friendship, and place her own beautifully white and rounded arm upon that of the *nouvelle noble, et nouvelle riche*, as if to heighten, by contrast, the value of her own *bras d'albâtre*."

"Oh! yes, that was to make Ashbourne, Wentworth, Beauchief, and that new-fangled ape, Mr. St. Julians, admire how exquisitely white and taper were her fingers, and how graceful the attitude in which she leant over the *chaise longue*."

"Oh, Miss Waldegrave," said Mr. Melford, carelessly disengaging himself from lady Hautville, "I have just heard

such

such a capital story of my friend Dunford, I must tell it to you."

Colonel Montrath, who was well aware that this gentleman was one continually talking without saying any thing, and "marred a good tale by telling it," walked silently away, and allowed himself to be persuaded into playing a game of bagatelle with Miss Harvey, while his seat was instantaneously seized by the gossiping Mr. Melford, who was charmed to find a listener in Georgiana; and without reflecting that his friend or acquaintance might be wholly a stranger to her, he thus began:—

"I suppose you know what a disciple of Epicurus, what a lover of good living, what an *ami du bon cher*, Dunford is; he lives in the highest style, keeps the best table of any man in London, gives his cook upwards of two hundred a-year, and in short has an establishment *très bien montée;* well, one morning a

very

very intimate friend of mine called upon him, and after gravely listening to his complaints of when he gave a dinner, he never could get a part of the side of a turbot placed next the dish (which by epicures is reckoned the only eatable part), as of course he was obliged to give those most delicate morsels to his guests, he, in order to console my friend——"

"Which friend, pray?" said lord Frederic Beauchief abruptly.

"Mr. Dunford's acquaintance," pursued the discomfited Melford, "said that this misery of being doomed to swallow the remainder of the fish, after the delicious part was eaten, could be easily obviated by having two turbots put on the table. The plan enchanted the epicure, who immediately summoned Monsieur Hachis, his cook, and told him, earnestly, to send up two fish instead of one he had ordered for that day's regale (he was to give a grand party).

He,

He, bien, Dunford, as you may imagine, already feasted in imagination on the favoured side next the dish, as he was determined, in his own mind, to have one turbot come in first, from which he would help his guests, but that the last should exclusively be appropriated to gratify his own appetite. Think, therefore, of his dismay, when, at the hour of dinner, two turbots indeed were placed on the table, but, oh! horror of horrors! in one dish, and, for climax of his misery, the largest and the finest popped on the top of the other. Here was an end to Dunford's happiness for the day, to his confidence in Mr. Hachis for his life—one fish was spoiled, and the other all devoured by his cormorant acquaintances—Ha, ha! was not that now a capital story of my friend Dunford?"

"Yes," said Georgiana, "I always wish epicures should suffer alive the pangs of Tantalus."

"What

"What a blundering manner he tells the simplest tale in!" murmured lord Frederic.

"Miss Waldegrave, you remember, I presume," pursued Mr. Melford, "your admirer, lord Monmouth?"

"*Le curieux,* certainly; but I never heard him designated as the admirer of any human being; he is always so busy in sifting out their characters, and discovering their foibles, he has not time to think of their perfections."

"Oh! you are quite mistaken," returned the other; "he preferred you to any belle in town last season, because you told him more *contes* than any one else, *et vous avez le don de raconter assurément—ah! qui raconte comme vous?*"

"She has likewise, I think," muttered inaudibly lord Frederic, "the invaluable gift of patience and forbearance. *Ciel!* what an eternal alarum! like a town clock, his tongue is ever going!"

"Well, you recollect lord Monmouth," resumed

resumed the other—"*cela suffit*—our friend you know."

"Yes, she does know him," impatiently exclaimed lord Frederic, weary of being condemned to silence by the overpowering gabble of one still more loquacious than himself; "Miss Waldegrave has just told you so."

"*He bien, mon ami de grâce, permettez moi de parler quelquefois à mademoiselle sans m'interdire*," cried Mr. Melford; "Monmouth is a——" here he shook his head gravely, lifted his eyebrows, and placed his finger on his skinny lips; "in short, you understand, by no means brilliant; *victime d'une curiosité dévorante*, he travels from one county to another, to pick up the most minute intelligence; and the exact annual income of every estate, with the mortgages and debts upon it, in the three kingdoms, he contrives to make himself acquainted with. He is a walking peerage, a living court calendar, a breathing Morning Post,

as prosing as the one, as exact as the other, and as gossiping as the third. He has wished to get into White's for several years, and accordingly put down his name in the list of pretenders, for the honour of being enrolled amongst the witty, the giddy, and the wise, the idle, the silly, the tiresome, and the foppish, merely, I believe, to find out the private history of every member in the club. A gentleman, a friend of mine (I forget his name), heard of Monmouth's determination, and resolved to blast the leaves of his budding and aspiring hopes.—'So,' exclaimed he, 'was I at the uttermost parts of the world, enveloped in the clouds of Mont Blanc, buried alive in the mines of Poland, skating gracefully over the icy bosom of the Neva, at the top of St. Peter's, enjoying the delights of a Parisian winter, beyond the Cataracts, drinking coffee with one of the Sheikhs of Egypt in the largest of the pyramids, or squatting in the seraglio of the Head

of the sublime Ottoman Empire, I would, on receiving the slightest intimation of Monmouth's being likely to succeed in his wishes, set off from my place of residence, travel all night and day, hardly eating, and never sleeping, till I arrived in London, when I would instantly appear at White's, and blackball the prying rogue. Imagine the despair your admirer, *le curieux*, evinced on hearing this intelligence. I was myself the bearer of the ill news."

"*Pardon, mille pardons!*" cried lord Frederic, (who had been listening with an expression of high glee, and undisguised amusement, to this anecdote, and which really made him resemble his aunt's monkey Jacquot, when about to perform some droll feat, or piece of mischief), "when I affirm that it was I, even I myself, who made the first avowal of an intention to blackball lord Monmouth, and was also the enemy who resolved to put myself to any inconveni-

ence

ence in accomplishing it; and," continued he, rubbing his hands, and laughing heartily, "I accounted for my singular behaviour to him in the following words—'It is of no use either now to tell my *façon de m'expliquer*—suffice it to say, that I mixed the wholesome, though bitter medicine of truth, with a little of the honey of flattery, and I never yet knew a man who refused to swallow that, even if we poured it into his ears against the stomach of his sense."

CHAPTER VII.

Fare thee well! all words are idle;
Words from me are vainer still,
But the thoughts we cannot bridle,
Force the way, without the will. LORD BYRON.

THERE is hardly a sorrow in life equal to the poignancy of that of bidding farewell, for an indefinite period, to those with whom our earliest, and consequently our happiest years have been past, in the reciprocation of mutual kind offices, and the endearments of a rational and well-founded esteem; but when from motives of virtuous prudence, it becomes an imperious duty to conceal the anguish occasioned by a parting interview from the object of our warmest, our dearest affections,

affections, that word, that fatal word, "farewell!" is indeed one in which we feel "there breathes despair."

The next day was the one destined for the departure of lord Ashbourne from Audleyhurst; and poor Julia Rivers, as (after adding her adieus to those of his family and friends) she retired to her own room, felt indeed that grief that passeth show, which does not seek to exhaust itself by complaint, or by exhibiting its sufferings to the eyes of others; she was unhappy, she was friendless, poor, and neglected, but she was religious; she had drank of that fountain which refreshes the wanderer of life, amid its darkest scenes, which adds strength to the humble, and lightens the burdens of the good and the afflicted.

In society, and under the eyes of lady Rosvellyn, she was borne up by the consoling thought of acting well, and supported by the idea of the necessity of concealing, from the observation of others,

 the

the agitation she internally suffered; she was well aware that one word, one look of tenderness or affection, would not pass unheeded by her lover; and as all hopes of getting the consent of the worldly lord Rosvellyn to the union of his son with a portionless orphan, she knew were ill-founded, fallacious, and delusory, her sense of right, and abhorrence of any dereliction from duty, enabled her to affect indifference towards lord Ashbourne, and not to give the slightest encouragement to his attachment. Yet in the solitude of her chamber, with no longer any stimulus to exertion, or necessity for concealment, Julia claimed the privilege of a mourner, and wept profusely; but the tears of a virtuous, a young, and an innocent being, soothe the sorrows from whence they proceed, and relieve the overcharged heart almost instantaneously. Her afflictions were not imaginary ones; her life had not even been a chequered

scene,

scene, a building of mosaic work, a path where flowers and thorns were both to be met with, but rather the tempestuous ocean, seldom calm, and generally agitated.

If Julia's tears flowed first, whilst thinking of lord Ashbourne's distress, and her own insulated situation and blighted prospects, they were soon changed into the tribute claimed by the departed from their living friends; her thoughts involuntarily reverted towards that happy home, where, once surrounded by

> "The changed, the loved, the lost,
> Too many, yet how few!"

by those affectionate and amiable beings, who were now as unconscious of her sorrows as they were before anxious to relieve them, she dwelt in peace. There is, however, a "joy in grief, which mourners only know," and the person who can look up with religious satisfac-

 tion

tion to God, in his hour of prosperity, will always find consolation in his lengthened days of probationary trouble. There is also a woe so gentle, so holy, so purified from earthly stain, that if the beings we regret were good and innocent, our feelings are nearly allied to pleasurable ones, when we contemplate their virtues. Do we mourn as Julia over the tomb of an aged father, who descended into the sepulchre rich in good works and faith, and hopes of a glorious immortality? If we weep as mortals still toiling through a world of care, and regretting the loved companion of our journey, we rejoice as Christians, who look beyond this transitory scene of life, and in imagination see the gates of heaven open, and our parent's hoary head crowned with a wreath of glory.

If it is upon the grave of the young, the blooming, the cherished, and the happy, we drop the tears of unfeigned and poignant anguish, there is still a

satisfaction

satisfaction left us amidst our distress; for we think he is taken away from the evil to come, and with the eye of faith behold the innocent and beautiful being, whose voice was music to our souls, whose joys and light afflictions, by sympathy we made our own, smiling with ineffable, unspeakable delight, receiving and conducting us to the assembly of saints and angels, and just men made perfect, to dwell for ever in happiness.

There is a hallowed, sacred tear,
Such as our Saviour shed,
Whilst viewing Laz'rus on his bier,
Unconscious, cold, and dead:

It is a tear that gives relief
To hearts which inly mourn
And bleed for friends, in silent grief,
From their embraces torn:

Ah! it is like the nightly dew,
Fair Nature's gentle balm,
Which, whilst night hides each pleasing view,
Drops noiseless in its calm.

And

And thus in deeply-fixed despair,
In sorrow's starless night,
Patience will soothe man's inmost care,
Its tear make sorrow light.

And Julia was patient, and had endured, with the serenity of a pure, and the devoted resignation of a religious mind, the destruction of her dearest hopes, the death of her best friends, the discomforts of a situation which called forth constantly, firm, practical piety, and daily trials of equanimity, and sweetness of temper; and lastly, the loss of that independent fortune, which, by appropriating it to administer to the wants of others, would in some measure have alleviated the severity of her own afflictions.

The next day she rose early, and hoping to fortify her spirits by a walk, she resolved to take one before the hour of breakfast, which at Audleyhurst was always extremely late. It was a bright frosty morning in January, the country was covered with snow, and the clear

radiance

radiance of an unclouded sun gleamed over the dazzlingly-white surface of the earth, and cast a variety of beautiful tints upon the icicles that hung like precious stones attached to the boughs of the leafless trees. There was a freshness in the breeze, which blew from the neighbouring bay, that invigorated the frame; whilst it inspired the mind with the buoyant feelings of reviving hope and joy; and the white sails of the small fishing-vessels, contrasted with the deep blue of the waves that bore them, added to the charms of the surrounding country, which, though arrayed in the livery of winter, still presented many attractions to the lovers of nature—the high mountains lifting their white summits to the clear and cloudless sky—the extensive woods, despoiled indeed of their summer foliage, and the general inequality of the ground, now rising into little hills, and then sinking precipitously, and forming quiet, retired-looking dingles, whose

 sides

sides were commonly fringed with brushwood, rendered even a winter's morning walk round Audleyhurst a varied and an interesting one.

Julia was not so completely engrossed by her feelings, as to be wholly indifferent to the beauties of the prospect now stretched before her eyes, but bitterly did she regret having walked out at all, when lord Ashbourne joined, and turned back to accompany her to the house.

"Do not dread, my beloved Miss Rivers," said he, in a tone of strong emotion, "that I seek to resume the subject of the last painful conversation I held with you; no, gentle and kind, as the sad expression of your rejection was, it still was too decided for me now to cherish the smallest hope of engaging your invaluable affections. You weep, my dear friend; do not endeavour to repress those tears; fear not that I shall think they proceed from any other source than pity for the pain you have innocent-

ly

ly caused. Yes, Miss Rivers, you have given me much pain; but while I deplore your indifference, I never shall cease to remember with gratitude the amiable sympathy you have manifested for my distress. I will endeavour to think of you hereafter merely as a sister, as the best, the most beloved of sisters; and may I hope that you will ever regard me in the sacred light of a brother, as a friend, who always must regard your welfare as his own?"

"The chosen companion of my darling Horatio," replied Julia, in a voice almost totally inaudible, "the beloved friend, the pitying comforter of his deathbed, will ever be regarded by me with sentiments of grateful esteem."

"And nothing more, Miss Rivers! do not stop, do not hesitate in making the avowal, but let me at least carry with me the satisfactory idea that——"

Here lady Rosvellyn met them, as they were proceeding up a long branching avenue,

avenue, and by the quickness of her motions, and indignant toss of the head, as she passed by lord Ashbourne, plainly marked her anger at his preferring a walk with Julia, at whom she darted a glance of furious contempt, to her own delectable society. As soon as she was out of sight, her son continued—" I have long been much grieved that you are subjected to the peevish unkindness of my mother; she has, however, delicate health and weak nerves to plead in extenuation for the wayward fretfulness of her disposition, and yet I own the unvarying sweetness of temper with which you bear lady Rosvellyn's reprehensible harshness, raises my admiration almost to adoration; you must therefore allow me, Miss Rivers, to put an end to her suspicions, by making the confession to her of my attachment and your rejection. Farewell, my dearest, most estimable Julia! my best, my excellent friend, farewell! yonder is the carriage

which

which perhaps bears me away from you for ever, and I must hasten to bid adieu to my móther and Caroline, and to tell the former of the demolition of all my fondest hopes."

Lord Ashbourne pressed her hand to his lips, and to his heart, and without trusting himself with a parting look, darted away, and his form was quickly lost amongst the trees of the park.

Julia gazed after him until her eye-balls throbbed painfully, and then, when recalled to herself, she sat down upon the stump of an old withered oak, and for some time indulged herself in all the luxury of woe.

CHAPTER VIII.

Graceful and useful all she does,
Blessing and blest where'er she goes,
Pure-bosomed as that wat'ry glass,
And heaven reflected in her face. COWPER.

LORD Ashbourne left Audleyhurst, without having had a favourable opportunity of disclosing the state of his heart to lady Rosvellyn, who consequently treated Miss Rivers with marked neglect for several days. She was always too cowardly to direct the fire of her insinuations and sly hints against the devoted person who had offended her openly; but rather, like a rifleman, she concealed the weapons she made use of, and would, whilst speaking on subjects the most

most indifferent, contrive to introduce covertly a great variety of disagreeable inuendoes, impertinent allusions, vague observations, and cutting remarks, which were calculated to pass unheeded by the individual her conversation was apparently addressed to, but could be understood by the unfortunate being who had fallen under the weight of her ladyship's displeasure.

Immediately, however, on lord Ashbourne's arrival in London, he sent a letter explanatory of the unhappy issue of his attachment, and containing the most unqualified praise of Julia's conduct, and exemplary character, both before and since the disclosure of his sentiments. After informing his mother of the reasons which induced him to go abroad, he concluded—

"My affection for Miss Rivers was one which derived its origin from perfect

perfect esteem. Her many virtues and talents, the exalted firmness and integrity of her principles, and the general excellence of her character, could not fail of inspiring my heart with unfeigned admiration and respect. Need I add, that sympathy and pity for her unmerited misfortunes, changed the feelings of regard and friendship I had long entertained for her into still warmer sentiments? The first time I saw Julia, she was surrounded by friends who almost adored her—the support, the comfort, of an aged and infirm father, and the pride, the delight of two affectionate noble-minded brothers; the youngest was my dearest, my earliest friend, and at this distance of time even I can hardly bear long to think how brief was the life of the generous, open-hearted Horatio. Poor fellow! I cannot recall without a sigh the remembrance of his vivacity, his virtues, and of that gay and cheering spirit, which even

never

never forsook him totally till the hour of his dissolution.

"In the days I speak of, his sister was, as she is now, beautiful; but the expression of melancholy was then never visible on her open countenance, except when her father looked ill, or talked, as is the custom of narrative old age, that his death was quickly approaching. She was rich too, happy, and giving happiness—admired by her equals, beloved by her inferiors. She was the theme of every one's praise, the charm of every society, the life of her own domestic circle. Animated, witty, cheerful, her wit never degenerated into satire—her animation, into overstrained gaiety. I then admired the ingenuous, the blooming, the lively, Miss Rivers; for though scarcely seventeen, her mind was cultivated, and manners formed, beyond what is generally found in that first period of youth; but if in prosperity she was amiable

amiable and attractive, in adversity she was magnanimous and great.

"The next time I beheld her, she was mourning over the tomb of her eldest brother, Francis; and Mr. Rivers, broken-hearted by the death of his son, deprived of the use of his limbs, had lost his memory and his intellects, and was the most affecting spectacle I ever witnessed of premature old age, brought on by affliction. Poor man! I shall never forget the pain I felt in seeing one, whose exalted talents I had long admired, whose many virtues long loved, reduced to a state of mental weakness bordering on childishness, and of bodily infirmity dreadful even to look upon; and never, never, shall I cease to remember, to venerate, to applaud his daughter's filial piety and dutiful attentions to him.

"Mr. Rivers had not the slightest recollection of ever having seen me before; and after making me tell my name

name—a name which he had heard so often, alas, with what different feelings!... —the unfortunate old man, grasping my hand, begged pardon for not knowing me, and thanked me for calling on him. —'I take it particularly kind of every stranger coming to me,' said he, 'for I seem neglected by all my children except Julia; Horatio and Francis both gone, and left me to die alone.'

"Julia afterwards informed me, with tears, that her venerable father sometimes imagined both his sons were gone on a journey (Horatio was absent with his regiment in Spain), and at others used to weep bitterly, thinking they were dead.

"When I again beheld Miss Rivers, it was at Brussels. Her father was dead; her youngest, her favourite brother, was lying on the bed of death, mortally wounded on the field of Waterloo. Amiable, excellent girl! I saw her bending over her Horatio, pale, emaciated, worn with bodily and mental suffering—

fering—a stranger in a foreign land, a desolate orphan, an unprotected female, yet still supported under her unimaginable and multiplied afflictions, by the idea of doing her duty, and by the consoling thought that her presence soothed the dying hours of the beloved and youthful sufferer, and shed a faint gleam of happiness round his couch of pain. Alas! her cares, her tears, her prayers, were unavailing; he died in her arms, comforting and blessing her with his latest breath.

"You know the rest; your own heart must feel an emotion of pleasure whenever you think you yourself became the protector of the friendless, the unhappy, the excellent, high-minded Julia. I will not go on: to dwell upon the idea that she is lost to me for ever, is still too painful. Let me, however, find that you have again received her into your confidence—restored her to your affection, and I shall be amply repaid for

for all the pangs of regret this recital has inflicted and renewed in my breast.

"Farewell, and believe me, with the most heartfelt sentiments of duty and affection,

"Your truly-attached son,

"ASHBOURNE."

Lady Rosvellyn received this letter as she was sitting in the comfortable, elegantly-furnished boudoir, with lady Caroline Fitzormond, who immediately exclaimed, on perusing its contents—"Well, my dear mother, I hope you are now convinced of the fallacy of your suspicions, and also of the unexampled excellence of poor Julia's character, who ever will to me be as a sister, though gratitude compels her to reject the offer of really becoming such," continued she, as tears of sympathy coursed each other rapidly down her cheeks.

"Yes, my dear," returned lady Ros-

vellyn,

vellyn, "I was undoubtedly wrong, and you, I suppose, in your heart, are glorying in your superior discernment; but I must beg leave to remind you, that I do not see any great strength of principle necessary to induce Miss Rivers to refuse a person wholly indifferent to her; indeed, instead of seeing any superior merit in this action, I only perceive an extraordinary iciness and coldness of heart, which are far from being an amiable trait in any woman's, particularly in any very young woman's character."

Lady Caroline sighed at this fresh instance of the perversity of judgment and cavilling disposition of her mother, but remained silent.

"Gracious Heaven! he is coming!" ejaculated the countess, with hasty alarm, at the same time dropping the scissars from her hand upon the floor, and throwing some embroidery she was employed in working on the table.

"Who,

"Who, pray?" said her daughter, coolly, well aware that lady Rosvellyn's hurry probably originated from the most trifling cause imaginable.

"Jacquot's prototype!" screamed the other.

"Another monkey, my dear mother! then go out of the room, my sweet George; the creature may bite or scratch you."

"La, mamma!" returned the little boy, loth to leave the fragile houses he was erecting on a sofa with cards, "it is only cousin Frederic grandmamma means, and he never scratched me in his life, and makes such pretty horses and jockeys out of paper for me."

"Be quiet, can't you, child; I want to hear whether my tiresome monkey of a nephew is coming up stairs. No, he is gone possibly into the billiard-room. I declare," continued she, "he wears me to death; his eternal chattering, grinning, impertinence, are a thou-

 sand

sand times more disagreeable to me than the tricks of Jacquot."

"Indeed, ma'am," returned lady Caroline, "I think he is very pleasant, and I like to be in his company; for when he is in the house, he makes all the *frais* of conversation himself."

"Now that speech was so characteristic, my love," said lady Rosvellyn; "you don't care what folly he utters, what noise he makes, if he will spare you the trouble of talking; however, Caroline, let me advise you to shake off a little of that Quasho and Quacolike indolence; it casts a veil over all your good qualities, I can tell you."

Lady Caroline went quietly on working a flounce, which had employed her at least a twelvemonth, and the silence which followed this civil speech of her mother's remained unbroken for several minutes, except by an occasional yawn from one lady, and a peevish psha from the other, as she disentangled a skein of

silk.

silk. At length, throwing it into the fire, lady Rosvellyn thus began a sound philippic against her unoffending nephew, lord Frederic Beauchief.

"Do you know, my dear Caroline," said she, "your cousin has been the torment of my life for the last week? but his behaviour now is really much improved from what it was in the beginning of the winter, when I was obliged to ask him, you know, to Audleyhurst, lest he should take it amiss; but I never requested him to bring any body along with him. Well, down comes my abominable puppy of a nephew, with a still more disagreeable friend, three horses, a groom, a valet, and a sick dog, which he said wanted change of air. By-the-bye, the animal was fed upon nothing but new wheat bread and white meats. Imagine with what astonishment I saw the whole cavalcade drive to the entrance-hall: first came a groom on one hunter, leading

 another;

another; then a cabriolet containing my two guests, one not invited or expected, and both unwelcome; then the valets, with the invalid spaniel, in a postchaise. Now can you guess how I received them?"

"With coldness, I suppose," returned the other.

"No, Caroline, with as much warmth and cordiality as I could assume; for I was determined to let lord Frederic Beauchief see his impertinent folly could not teaze me; but at dinner, I own the friend was too much for me. Conceive, my dear, a young man always listening and watching, and weighing one's words and motions, like a lynx; perpetually asking questions, taking snuff every minute, and sneezing every second, for he had a violent cold. I wanted to persuade lord Monmouth (that was the coxcomb's name) that Audleyhurst was a dreadfully-exposed situation, and that his lungs would be injured by the north-easterly

easterly winds; but all in vain—the creature staid and staid, coughed and coughed, sneezed and sneezed, and talked and talked on, for three weeks, when, after having collected every sort of information respecting all the people in ——shire, the wretch departed to consult Dr. Baillie. Then you are aware how anxious I am to spend my Sunday evenings quietly, but these two tiresome friends, this clacking Pylades, this seeking Orestes, determined to disturb the tranquillity of my life by playing billiards, and the hall echoed with peals of unmeaning laughter. The rainy days, after exhausting in succession their time and my patience, at the noisy games of backgammon and battledore-and-shuttlecock, they used to amuse themselves with fencing; and the shouts of the victor, and vociferations of the vanquished, resounded over the house. Oh! I forgot to tell you, Caroline, that directly Frèderic saw I was annoyed

 and

and irritated beyond measure, at the inquisitiveness of his friend, he played him off, and encouraged his favourite foible in a most provoking manner, by telling him stories of people he knew in reality nothing about. Indeed," continued the countess, speaking with all the energy of truth and anger, "your cousin is the most empty-headed, moon-governed, shallow-brained, giddy, vain, and nonsensical person existing. His wit is mere boldness, his sense all pretension, his satire all ill-nature, and his vivacity all forced."

She had for some time heard many suppressed little laughs from a sofa behind her; but attributing them to George, lady Rosvellyn had gone on delightfully with her favourite style of conversation, finding fault, for nearly half an hour, without interruption, and would doubtless have lengthened her speech, when lord Frederic rose from his reclining posture, and, with an air of mock

mock devotion and assumed respect, bowed lowly to her ladyship, who, without waiting to utter a syllable, saw the door was open, and departed abruptly.

"Now, really," said the good-humoured lord Frederic, advancing carelessly towards lady Caroline Fitzormond, "my aunt, instead of abusing, ought to have praised me, for endeavouring to cheer her lonely hours with my coruscations of wit and flashes of merriment, and by the constant bustle of my inquiring friend. Monmouth is as good-hearted a fellow as any breathing; not very bright, to be sure, but his questions are amazingly amusing—so minute, so odd, so——in short, so vastly droll. Besides, he is quite an original—an unique. Now, in these days, when most young men resemble each other as much in the polite nothingness and insipidity of their conversation, as in their brushy, frizzled heads, absurd dress, and shallow brains, as madame *ma tante* says, one

 would

would have thought Monmouth would have been a perfect treasure to any respectable, toothless, stiff-starched, antiquated dowager, always fretting and complaining of the fashions, and the manners of the present degenerate age; every thing new also is fascinating; and though curiosity becomes undoubtedly tiresome for a continuance, yet, when first introduced, I can assure you his, lord Monmouth's, original sin is, as it is 'passing strange,' also uncommonly entertaining."

"I thought you were going out riding, Frederic," returned his cousin, "with Miss Waldegrave."

"And so I am, my beloved and adroit turner of subjects which suits not thy taste, to call upon the silly Mrs. Newton, who, you know, is always of the opinion of the last person who vouchsafes to speak unto her."

"Oh, the merry mockbird we are to pay a flying visit to," exclaimed Georgiana.

ana, entering the boudoir, equipped for a ride—" the gaily-adorned and gaudy parrot who dwells in Wood Vale!"

" I am sure she does not merit that appellation by her loquacity," remarked lady Caroline.

" No, but you must allow she imitates whatever she sees, talks without knowing the meaning of the words she utters, like a parrot, and always seems in such admiration of herself, I generally expect her to make the resemblance greater, by hearing her cry out in accents of delight, *à soi-même*, 'Pretty Poll! pretty Poll!'"

" She is abominably conceited, certainly, Miss Waldegrave," rejoined lord Frederic Beauchief; " it is indeed difficult to decide which is the most disagreeable of the two, Mr. or Mrs. Newton; one likes the monosyllable no, as much as the other does its more pleasing opposite, yes; so I have for some time given them two very applicable *sobriquets*, the negative and the affirm-

native. One day a lady asked Mrs. Newton what coloured horses looked best in harness, brown or iron grey? 'Oh!' replied the mockbird, pursing up her white lips, to hide the ruins of what had once been a fine set of teeth, 'I can't think of giving my opinion before hearing that of your ladyship, whose taste, I know, is exquisite.'—'I like grey, then, best,' was the answer.—'Dear, how odd!' returned the other, with a start and smile, meant to express pleasure and surprise, that her taste should coincide with the exquisite one of her visitor: 'I am astonished and delighted beyond measure, to find my opinions, in even so small a matter, are similar to yours, my dear madam.'—'I am sure I am more astonished, and by no means delighted,' muttered her gruff husband (whose habits and manners, you know, are *de l'autre monde*), to find your opinions, Mrs. Newton, as you call them, change about so, like a ship's flag in a storm;

storm; for it was but yesterday you declared brown was the only bearable colour for horses, and that iron grey looked like dingy black powdered with dirty flour."

"She is indubitably," said Georgiana, "a cameleon; she changes her dress, her manners, her temper, her voice, her follies, and her sentiments, a hundred times a-day: but I must call on the Miss Rushbrooks; it is two o'clock; may I trouble you to ring the bell, my lord, and inquire if our horses are ready? I hope we shall be admitted up stairs. It would really amuse you to see the young ladies' morning-room. Oh, such a room! chairs, sofas, tables, china, bird-cages, ottomans, footstools, inkstands, prints, workboxes, flowerpots, and well-bound books, all thrown confusedly together, like, lady Caroline, the pie you were mentioning yesterday, composed of fish, flesh, and fowl."

 "I dislike

"I dislike the present mode of arranging furniture, but I thought you were an advocate for it."

"I am. I like every thing I mentioned at the Rushbrooks to be found in an apartment, neatly arranged, in a picturesque and elegant manner, but not all jumbled together; a birdcage on the top of a book, to hinder its being opened; a screen placed behind a hill of china, to prevent its being used: oh, no! you may as soon say I wish to travel to the antipodes, merely because I have an ardent desire to go abroad for a few months."

"Well, my dear Miss Waldegrave, I must say, I think it is impossible to place all the quantity of things you mention in a room in a comfortable way," drawled lady Caroline, trying in vain to suppress a yawn; "and besides the frightful disorder, confusion, and litter, it makes about a room, when

one

one wants any thing in a hurry, it is impossible to find it till after a long troublesome search."

"Mrs. Wellmont, my lady," said a footman, entering, and in walked, or rather waddled, a short, fat, clumsy-looking, little woman, with enormous cheeks, "as broad and red as a pulpit cushion," and dressed in a flame-coloured robe of silk, flounced and furbelowed with the same fiery material, but which hardly equalled the crimson of the wearer's countenance. A superb ruby-coloured Indian shawl was drawn tight over her bosom, and a hat, with an immense plume of black feathers, completed her attire, and made her look, lord Frederic declared, like a large piece of round coal, almost completely red-hot.

CHAP-

CHAPTER IX.

There are a sort of people to whom one would allot good wishes and perform good offices; but they are sometimes those with whom one would by no means share one's time. SHENSTONE.

MRS. Wellmont was a very good woman, but she was also a very weak one, and had one particular folly, blended with many valuable qualities, that could scarcely fail of rendering her an object of ridicule; in short, she had the nobility mania, the coronet frenzy, to a high degree—

"Dans le brillant commerce elle se mêle sans cesse,
Et ne cite jamais que duc, prince, ou princesse."

A par-

A *parvenue* herself, she had a perfect rage, a passion, for high birth; fortune she did not prize; it was rank—it was title. My lord, or your grace, were ravishing sounds to her plebeian ears; and though a mushroom herself, sprung from the farmyard of a rich honest Yorkshire grazier, she heartily despised those of mean and vulgar parentage. No Catholic ever maintained the infallibility of the pope with greater energy or firmness than this lady would the opinion of a nobleman. Her large income, and alliance to a family of fashion, procured her admittance into the great world, and after toiling for several years to gain a large acquaintance, by giving dinners, routs, balls, and parties, was now arrived at that time of life when the world commonly, and its vanities, begin to lose their charms.

Mrs. Wellmont was still, however, as much engaged in them as when she first left Yorkshire, the lively, vulgar, boisterous,

terous, and good-humoured Miss Greenfield. Often did it happen that the objects of her most devoted predilection were as senseless, witless, heavy, and hard-headed, as the golden calf of the Israelites in the wilderness; and still oftener did it fall out, that whilst they partook of her splendid dinners, and added one more to her crowded parties, danced at her balls, or talked and laughed at her concerts, she was the object of their sarcasm and ill-natured remarks, by the very anxiety she shewed to make herself agreeable to them.

However, though wit, sense, and beauty, had been niggards of their gifts, Plutus had given her a golden coffer, to hide her lenient faults and numerous follies in; and the genius of virtue and benevolence had illuminated her rubicund face and swelled features with the ray of good temper, which rendered them pleasing, and softened their excessive ugliness of expression.

As

As soon as she seated her enormous person in a lounger, in which, however, as if to shew her deference to a duke's son and an earl's daughter, she remained bolt upright, and absolutely placed on the very edge of the chair, she said, in a voice, which well accorded with the uncouthness of her figure—" I came, my dear lady Caroline, to tell you a story."

" The devil she did!" cried lord Frederic to Georgiana; " then she came ten miles to tell what no one will listen to."

" A story," she continued, " I am sure, well calculated to interest all this amiable, as well as noble, family at Audleyhurst."

" If it is meant to interest one of that august and charming family," returned lord Frederic, whispering, " I am sure, old lady, you must not tell it. What a disgusting cough she has, like the hugh-hugh of a broken-winded horse!"

" In

"In short, my dear lady Caroline, in the neighbouring country town there is lately arrived a set of strolling players, all, of course, as poor, miserable, and ragged, as Hamlet the Dane, when he sent to the king, his father-in-law uncle, that he was landed on the coast of Denmark; but the head, or manager, of this forlorn little theatre, has met with a variety of misfortunes, which, I own, has deeply interested, and excited the strongest commiseration in my heart, as I am sure it will in your ladyship's also; therefore I have proposed to all my acquaintance the following plan of alleviating his most pressing pecuniary embarrassments, that is, by every family in the neighbourhood joining in a subscription, and likewise by attending now and then the theatre, which is generally empty."

Lady Caroline gladly acceded to the request, and drawing out her purse, instantly set her own name at the head of the

the subscription, but was too lazy to think of going out of the room in search of lady Rosvellyn to do the same.

"The horses are ready, my lord," said a servant, bouncing the door open with a prodigious force, which half roused lady Caroline Fitzormond from her yawning apathy.

"Very well, sir," she murmured, languidly; "but I would thank you not to speak so loud, or swing the door off its hinges."

"Bless me, my dear lord Frederic Beauchief, you don't, I hope and trust," exclaimed Mrs. Wellmont, her hands and eyes raised in astonishment, "intend to venture out such a day as this? Gracious powers! and Miss Waldegrave has got her habit on, as if she was going to accompany you. Why, my lord, the country is as much covered with ice as the Frozen Ocean! To ride would be absolute madness. I myself, who am

never

never nervous in a carriage, walked every step of the way from Pentonville."

"But, my dear ma'am," rejoined he, "it is better to die happily than miserably at any time; and if I reside much longer in this mansion, enveloped with snow—this iceberg, as I may call it, I shall expire from the effects of ennui."

"Goodness, my dear lord, you forget you leave a warm comfortable house, to travel over the snow of which you complain so bitterly; and with such companions as these," continued Mrs. Wellmont, eyeing with wonderful complacency Miss Waldegrave and lady Caroline, "you cannot be in want of conversation."

"But one wishes to escape from her prison-house, and the other sleeps or dozes all day; besides,

'Who would be doomed to gaze upon
The sky, without a cloud or sun?
Less hideous far the billows roar,'

and

and so on; and I confess, rather than continue reclined on the same lounger, with my feet on the same footstool, looking at the same furniture, reading the same book, be warmed by the same fire, and hear the same voice, even though Miss Waldegrave's speech is as 'the warbling of the vernal grove,' I would prefer a frisky horse, an unsafe and slippery road, and the eternal clickclack of the repeating watch, Mrs. Wellmont, than stay here, warm, snug, idle, tired to death with sameness, and sick of tranquillity. *Oui, vraiment,* this little room is aptly named a *boudoir;* I am sure I never enter it without being sulky and pouting."

"Sulky! pouting! You are the life of every party—the best and sweetest-tempered person probably existing!"

"Oh! I beg your pardon, ma'am; I can be very cross sometimes," cried lord Frederic, impatiently.

"Methinks

"Methinks your lordship doth protest too much.'
'Ay, but he'll keep his word,'

"most undoubtedly, if we say any more about good-humour; for, as a child, when it is praised, always behaves amiss, so it is with 'man, that pendulum between a smile and tear."

"Well, well, go along then," returned Mrs. Wellmont, laughing; "take your ride, and remember you come home with a mind as gay and cheerful as when you set out, my lord."

CHAPTER X.

All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players.
As You Like it.

Mrs. Wellmont had interested herself so warmly about the misfortunes of the poor actor, and had so effectually awoke the sleeping charity of her numerous friends and acquaintances, that the benefit-night of the manager was graced by the company of all the neighbouring families for many miles round the small town of ——.

In vain lady Rosvellyn peevishly declared, that all who went to a country theatre, filled by country bumpkins, when the snow was on the ground, deserved

served to suffer all the penalties of imprudence; in vain did she prognosticate that sore throats, inflammations, and all the family of fevers, would attend the steps of every one of the party. In vain did lady Caroline gently insinuate, that the trouble would be as great as the cold was intense; in vain did lady Hautville talk of the ophthalmia, and Miss Harvey exclaim, in whining accents, her hair would be out of curl, and her feet cold. Mrs. Wellmont had, by some unaccountable magic, bewitched the rest of the people of Audleyhurst, and instilled into their minds some portion of the pitying benevolence which warmed her own kind heart; lord Frederic Beauchief was eloquent, Georgiana vehement, sir Lionel Wentworth animated, sir Gower Fitzormond loud, Julia eager, and of course her admirer, Mr. Rushbrook, also, to induce the others to patronize the starving actor, and his fellow-labourers.

At length, after many an argument, it

it was decided that every body should go, with the exception of lady Rosvellyn and her daughter; and as the latter declined taking any share in the evening's amusement, or rather penance, Georgiana thought she perceived a hurry, an agitation in her manners, and a slight trembling in her voice, that made her fear she had heard some unpleasant news.

"I hope nothing," she asked, in a tone of sincere affection, "is the matter with the sweet children, my dear lady Caroline, at Dalberry Park."

"Nothing, nothing, my beloved girl; I cannot explain to-night the cause of my emotion, but to-morrow——" she stopped abruptly, and her eyes filled with tears; "God bless you, my love, and good-night!"

"Miss Waldegrave," said sir Lionel Wentworth, approaching, "may I have the honour of conducting you to the carriage?"

These were the first words he had deigned

deigned to address to her since his arrival at Audleyhurst, and Georgiana felt surprised and pleased, as in reality she preferred sir Lionel to any other person, and it was merely pique that led her to behave with such pointed coldness towards him on his first appearance. Colonel Montrath had informed her of a report of his intended union with a lady Charlotte Gayville, a person particularly disliked, and laughed at, by Miss Waldegrave; and she, with all the unsuspecting simplicity of youth, easily believed it to be true for some time, till one morning she saw the marriage of the lady with a nobleman in the newspapers.

If, therefore, she was astonished at sir Lionel's *premier abord*, she was still more so at his behaviour during this eventful evening, as he never left her side for an instant, treated her with the same cordiality as ever, and was, in short, the attentive friend and pleasing companion.

Still,

Still, however, there was a deeper melancholy marked upon his features, a tone of more apparent dejection in his voice, than she had ever before remarked, and she sometimes imagined his eyes were fixed on her, with an expression of tender pity and gentle commiseration.

When the whole party were assembled in the theatre, for some minutes, as they were arranging themselves, they contrived to make so much bustle, confusion, and noise, that if the heroes of the buskin had begun to spout, not a single person in the house could have heard the sound of their voices; but fortunately the play, which was the "School for Scandal," had not commenced, and they had all seated themselves for some time before the curtain drew up.

"Does not this theatre," cried lord Frederic, "look like a lantern fitted up for a baby-house?"

"Exactly," rejoined colonel Montrath;

"and do not you find the smell of the horrid lantern, and train oil of the same, newly lighted?"

"How dark it is!" exclaimed lady Langham; "I can't see the stage."

"Oh, mamma! what a contrast to Covent Garden!"

"Did you expect the brilliancy of a London theatre, Miss Harvey?" coldly asked sir Lionel Wentworth.

"La! no, to be sure: my shawl, if you please."

"Spread it over the seats then, I pray," cried Miss Fanny Langham; "they are so dirty, I am afraid of contamination."

"This smell of tobacco is not to be endured, so I really must return to Audleyhurst; I shall expire when the wretches begin to spout! *Adio, servo divotissimo,*" said, with a low bow to lady Hautville, Mr. St. Julians, as he left the box.

"How glad I am I did not take out this sugarcandy I brought with me," said

said lord Frederic, "a moment before! for as sweets are as powerful temptations to flies as the smoke of tobacco is a poison to them, I verily believe we should not have got rid of that St. Julians all night."

At this moment the curtain was drawn, or rather hauled, slowly up, and lord Frederic Beauchief was, too deeply engaged with looking through his opera-glass at the miserable attempts at scenery, to speak for the space of five minutes; at length he exclaimed, in by no means an inaudible voice—"Who are those extraordinary-looking people? a candle-snuffer and a scene-shifter? no, the refined lady Sneerwell, and the accomplished Snake—the oil and vinegar of the inimitable Sheridan! what an Irish brogue the lady has! and what a provincial dialect the gentleman! Ha, ha! he says—'Mrs. Clackit az bin zuccezful in er/day, and to iz knowlitch az bin the cauze of zix matchiss being broken aff.'—Delicious! a pinch of snuff, sir

 Lionel—

Lionel—thank you. Your scarf, my dear Miss Langham?—I have not got it; oh! yes (beg a thousand pardons), twirled round my arm; but I am the most absent creature in the world—a second Menalcas! allow me to put it on. Oh! here's Joseph Surface—what an inveterate squint the fellow has! I don't wonder at Rowley's hating him; that face of his is enough to give him the appellation of Tyburn Joe! Miss Waldegrave, did you see the bob lady Sneerwell made at his entrance, and his acknowledged nod? Would not that humdrum tone now be excellent in sir Christopher Hatton, in the Critic? Capital! Bravo!"—and lord Frederic clapped and clapped, and laughed and laughed, till he coughed and coughed, and was obliged to be silent for a few minutes, and eat sugarcandy.

"Here comes Maria," affectedly drawled colonel Montrath; "what an old shrivelled hag it is! beg, borrow, or steal

a broom-

a broomstick, and let us see you ride through the air as a witch! Oh! she is sentimental, sweet creature! how she lisps and languishes!"

"Do not, let me implore you," said Georgiana, "speak so loud; the poor creature will hear you."

"Now really, Miss Waldegrave, it is too ridiculous to hear *you* find fault with people for laughing at others."

"I am, perhaps," she rejoined, "too apt to smile at faults and follies, of which I myself have too large a share; but never have I intentionally tried to wound the feelings of the poor or the unhappy."

"You will remember with pleasure," said sir Lionel Wentworth, in a low voice, "when you yourself are in affliction, that, in the bright days of unclouded happiness, you never sought to pour drops of gall into the cup of the sorrowful!"

Lord Frederic had by this time recover-

ed his voice, and of course instantly made use of it, by continuing his desultory conversation and flying remarks.

"Look at sir Benjamin Backbite?" said he, in a whisper to Mr. Melford, for he was too well bred to speak audibly, when a lady had desired him not to do so; "I should think the name of the baronet well chosen—do you catch the idea? He most assuredly resembles one of Falstaff's ragged regiment of soldiers. I long to tell that pair—'sure such a pair were never seen!'—they are acting a comedy, not a tragedy; how grave and stupid they all look! and the only person who should appear cross, the sour Crabtree, smiles and simpers in a most ridiculous manner. Lady Hautville, you look pale" (the fair one had rouged less than usual to play the interesting *invalide*)—"Miss Harvey, your smelling bottle, if you please? Lady Teazle advances—clap, colonel Montrath! clap, all of

of you! What a fat, old, vulgar, boisterous, lame, short-petticoated dame Humph! why, in point of age, I think sir Peter had more right to complain of the decrepitude and declining years of his spouse, than her ladyship had of the great age of her husband; indeed, I can well believe, madam, that in the earlier part of your life, you sat all day at your tambour, superintending your father's poultry, and making extracts from a receipt-book, that is, if you can write at all. What a boy sir Peter is! and, oh! what a pair of legs—signposts—and the feet look like square flagstones beneath them! The devil! sir Peter, why do not you silence the shrill impertinence of your frightful wife at once, by kicking her off the stage?—one slight thrust, and 'she is fallen, never to move again!' she is too fat, too squat, ever to rise without assistance."

"You forget, my dear lord Frederic," drawled colonel Montrath, "that she would soon bring some one towards her;

she has a voice louder than the cannon's roar; and, oh! that laugh was like the growling of the coming storm!"

"Hush," said Miss Rivers; "what a sulphureous smell."

"Psha!" cried sir Gower Fitzormond, "it is only the stench of the tallow-candles going out."

At this instant a buz from the pit was heard, which soon spread all over the theatre, and a volume of smoke burst from behind the scenes, and hid the actors from sight.

There was a momentary stillness, a solemn pause, like the calm which precedes a burst of thunder and a flash of lightning; Georgiana looked round—sir Lionel Wentworth and lord Frederic Beauchief had both disappeared.

At length the clamours of the people endeavouring to force their way out at the doors—the repeated yells of "fire! fire!" convinced her of the fatal truth, that the building was in flames.

To

To describe the bustle, the uproar, the confusion, would be almost impossible. The selfishness of man became apparent; every one seemed eager to save their own lives, at the expence of those of others, and, in the hurry and alarm of the moment, trampled even their friends under foot, to gain a free passage for themselves.

The screams of women and children, and the horrid oaths of the men, as they pushed their way out of the falling theatre, mingled awfully with the crackling of the walls, and the noise of the fire-engines, which, on account of the continued fall of snow, could not play effectually.

Sir Lionel returned as quickly as possible, accompanied by lord Frederic, to aid the unhappy sufferers, who remained still immured in the boxes, and each taking two ladies under their protection, safely conveyed them out of the theatre.

What was sir Lionel Wentworth's anguish, when, by the light of an ex-

piring torch, he perceived that the persons he had hazarded his own life to save, were people wholly indifferent, almost unknown to him! Without waiting to hear the thanks of the individuals he had succoured, he flew back to the burning building, with all the energy of despair, and at the entrance he met colonel Montrath, who, on seeing him, exclaimed—"It would be madness to tempt your fate further, Wentworth; every person is also saved but one."

"And that one," rejoined sir Lionel, his heart throbbing with emotion—

"Is Miss Waldegrave; there is no hope whatever of her being alive; all by this time must be over. Alas! noble, high-spirited girl! she would not leave the box till every other lady was taken out of it."

"Great God! and had you the heart to leave her?"

"I did as she directed," replied the colonel, with the characteristic self-possession

possession of a soldier; "I supported the fainting lady Hautville to her carriage, and then returned to look for her and Miss Harvey; but it is too late—that side of the building is burnt down."

Before he finished speaking, sir Lionel had darted fleetly past him, and was ascending the stairs leading to the boxes, which providentially had not yet given way. He found Georgiana alone, amidst the smoke of the flames, which were now so near as almost to scorch her face; the lovely, self-immolated victim was sitting, pale and motionless, indeed, as a marble statue, but still preserving the dignified determination of her manner; her beautiful eyes were raised with an expression of devoted resignation and religious hope towards heaven, and her white alabaster hands joined in the act of prayer.

Directly she caught a glimpse of the figure of sir Lionel Wentworth, she sprang towards him, and burst into a torrent of tears; and the hands she clasped

clasped convulsively in hers were bedewed with the drops which fell, not at the prospect of her own dying agonies, but merely at the thought that the being she so highly esteemed had returned to share them with her.

"It is too late," she whispered, in the low suppressed tone of horror; "the beam over the lobby has fallen; I heard it sink with a dreadful crash, as you entered."

"No; it was but the rafter on the other side," he returned; "noble, high-minded, beloved Georgiana," for every other feeling was lost in the contemplation of her transcendent courage, "bear up a little longer, and we shall still be safe."

They left the box; through flames and crackling beams they forced their way, and in a minute after they quitted the building, the side of it they had just left fell with a tremendous crash.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XI.

The only amaranthine flower on earth
Is virtue; the only lasting treasure, truth.

COWPER.

THE morning was bleak and stormy, when sir Lionel Wentworth, the day after the fire at ———, feverish from mental agitation, as well as bodily exertion, rose early, and sought to compose his disturbed feelings, as well as renovate and refresh his outward frame, by a long and solitary walk.

Lady Caroline Fitzormond had informed sir Lionel the preceding evening of the dissolution of Miss Waldegrave's father, which had taken place suddenly at

at his seat, Valverde, situated in the county of ——; and pity and sympathy for Georgiana's sorrows naturally led the way to the revival of his affection for her, which, from the cold manner in which she treated him, an old friend, on his first appearance at Audleyhurst, as well as by the apparent pleasure she evinced on receiving lord Frederic Beauchief's marked attentions, had insensibly diminished, and even wholly disappeared, from his proud and sensitive heart. However, his mind was too well constructed to harbour enmity against a distressed and weeping orphan; and accordingly, directly he received the fatal intelligence, all sense of his own disappointment and well-founded anger was buried for ever in oblivion.

But if Georgiana's misfortunes had made him pity and forgive her, her noble conduct at the theatre *renewed* his sentiments of affection: there was something so great in her contempt of death—

death—so magnanimous, so disinterested, in her refusal of being placed in safety before her companions in danger, that could hardly fail of exciting, in the truly good and benevolent mind of sir Lionel Wentworth, the highest feelings of esteem and friendship. She was also the chosen friend of his departed sister—of that sister whose various afflictions she had lightened by sympathizing with them, and whose dying pillow smoothed, with all the fondness and endearing kindness of a guardian angel. Undoubtedly she had many foibles; she was headstrong, impetuous, vain, giddy, satirical, and capricious; but were not these rather the consequences of a defective education, and the errors of a spoiled and too-greatly-indulged child, than the radical and original vices of her character? She was very young, and certainly possessed a vigour of intellect, quickness of comprehension, superiority of talent, and ductility of mind, which, when properly guided

guided and directed, would surely lead her into the paths of integrity and virtue; in short, sir Lionel contrived, in the short space of an hour, to reason himself into the opinion that a person of his cast of disposition would be exactly fitted for the guardian of Miss Waldegrave. He little imagined the will of her father appointed him such.

As he walked slowly towards the house, a carriage passed rapidly by him, but not before he received the parting bow of Miss Rivers, who kindly undertook not only to inform poor Georgiana of her loss in the gentlest manner, but also to accompany her to the house of mourning, and to endeavour, by every affectionate means in her power, to alleviate the first smart of a new and agonizing grief.

The pallid countenance of the dejected orphan met his eye, and so sad was the fixed expression of her beautiful features, and, through the severity of her woe, so totally

totally unconscious did she appear of all outward things, that sir Lionel was instantly convinced Miss Waldegrave was fully acquainted with the extent of her misfortune—"She does not yet know," mentally exclaimed he, "that it is better to lose a parent by death, than to be obliged to mourn over their vices; she is not yet aware that the tear which falls in bitterness upon the graves of those we love, does not proceed from such poignant anguish as the one that drops upon the bed of the beloved sufferer, who knows not when a friend is near; yes, it is better to weep over the tombs of the virtuous, who have vanished quickly to the world of spirits, than to watch, by the couch of pain and delirium, over a being fondly adored, and yet unconscious of a relation's presence."

His thoughts had reverted to his sister, who, for months previous to her dissolution, had apparently been utterly insensible

insensible to the tears of her father, and the caresses of her brother.

Sir Lionel gazed after the carriage, but he thought not then of its inmates; imagination and memory recalled his beloved Florence to his mind, and the prospect now stretched before him forcibly renewed the subdued grief of his heart.

It was a lone retired glen, such as are seldom to be met with out of the boundaries of the " land of the mountain and the flood," and its sides were covered with every species of evergreen; the arbutus, the yew, the cedar, the arbor vitæ, grew with singular luxuriance, and cast a gloomy and funereal shade upon the waters of a brawling stream that dashed turbulently down some fragments of rock which obstructed its free passage. They had probably been placed there by artificial means, to enhance the beauty of this favoured spot by their

appearance,

appearance, and certainly the noise of the brooks rushing over them added much to the idea of the imposing solitude of this little dell. It was a place peculiarly adapted for meditation, and which seemed rather calculated for the abode of some pious hermit, than as a resort for the motley groups generally assembled at the mansion, a part of the pleasure-grounds of which it formed.

Sir Lionel Wentworth sighed deeply as he approached this scene of unmingled tranquillity and unbroken repose; to him indeed it was one of powerful, but it was also of melancholy interest. The last time he trod the path leading to it, Florence was leaning on his arm, happy, blooming, telling her brother of all her plans of future happiness, and listening earnestly to every word he uttered in reply. Now where was she?—"And why," he thought, "do I seek to recall the idea of a happiness I shall never more enjoy?"

He

He walked rapidly towards a rustic seat, and sat down; it was there his sister engendered the seeds of that malady, which, after a year of protracted suffering, at length brought her to the grave. The day when sir Lionel last rested there, he had walked several miles with his sister, who, much tired in passing it, entreated to be allowed to repose her wearied limbs. She did so—caught a cold, which terminated, after many months illness, in a brain fever, and she died.

Florence Wentworth was gifted with an imagination the most vivid, and an ardent love for poetry and music, and it had been a solace, in the moments of sorrow, languor, and ill-health, to compose various little poems descriptive of her feelings; they were all perhaps demonstrative of a mind of sensibility, subject to morbid fits of melancholy, but with slender pretensions to poetical beauty, and destitute of interest to any person not personally acquainted with the kindness of

her

her heart, and gentleness of her disposition. To her brother, however, they possessed many charms, and he now read, with pensive regret, his dying sister's

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FAREWELL TO THE WORLD.

"Farewell to the world that's around me!
Like me, soon 'twill turn to decay.
Farewell to the ties which there bound me—
To my friends—to the light of the day!

"And I weep as I bid ye adieu,
Kind beings, around my deathbed!
And whilst tear-drops my pale cheeks bedew,
I mark those ye uselessly shed.

"When a few rolling seasons are o'er,
We shall meet to dwell ever in joy.
Blest thought! we shall part then no more—
No more will death's arrows detroy.

"Farewell

"Farewell to the wide-spreading wood!
Oh! the leaves of each tall waving tree,
That the storms of long ages have stood,
Soon will scatter their ashes on me!

"Farewell to the deep-fathom'd ocean,
Whose caves are vast tombs for the brave!
I gaze on thee now with emotion—
I sigh for a quieter grave.

"Farewell to the calm gliding stream,
Its surface unruffled and clear,
On whose bosom now resteth the beam,
To sorrow so mournfully dear!

"Farewell to the beautiful sky!
Ah, no! there I hope long to dwell;
And this thought, till I breathe the last sigh,
Will brighten this last—last farewell!"



He paused for a few minutes, and fixing his eyes on the waters, which, calmly flowing beneath his feet, bathed the

the light green turf, now deprived of its wintry covering of snow, his memory recalled the many fascinating charms and accomplishments of that lovely being, the memorial of whose poetical talents he held in his hand. Though hers was long since mouldered in the dust, imagination portrayed the image of the lovely Florence, one moment healthy, blooming, beautiful, but still with that melancholy impressed on her features, as if she had foreboded her early fate; and then pale, languid, spiritless, lying on the bed, from which it was destined she was never more to rise.

As he contrasted the past with the present, Florence by his side, happy, smiling, and contented, and then as the tenant of a dark and cheerless tomb, sir Lionel's feelings became too poignant any longer to restrain; and he who was termed the cold-hearted misanthrope, in the emphatic language of scripture, "lifted up his voice and wept aloud."

How aptly has Grey, in a single couplet, explained, that grief for the loss of our departed friends prompts us—

"To fruitless mourn for them that cannot hear,
And weep the more because we weep in vain!"

It is not that they are absent from us that we weep, but merely because we know we have parted never to meet more on earth.

Again his eye wandered over the pages he held in his hand, and he read the following lines, composed a short time before his sister's illness assumed a more terrific form:—

"Cool is the breeze, and evening's balmy air
The languor of disease a while beguiles;
For some short moments I may hope to share
One fleeting ray of health's auspicious smiles.
If aught could charm my mental ills away—
If aught could check the tear of bitter woe,
Arrest the hand of premature decay,
And bid the pallid cheek with blushes glow,

It

It would be this, this breeze, this sun, this sky!
Ah! surely, yes, so soon I shall not die!

"Yet nature's beauties quickly fade away;
To-morrow's sun may veil'd in mists remain,
Or half obscur'd appear his golden ray,
Drench'd in cold drops of icy sleet or rain;
And though it shine in matchless splendour bright,
That sun must sink, and at the close of day,
Darkness will hide the bluest sky from sight,
As sorrow's gushing tear will quench each warm delight."

He had just finished the second stanza, when the voice of colonel Montrath, entreating him to come and see a brace of fine pointers, broke off sir Lionel Wentworth's train of sorrowful ideas, and compelled him to descend to the every-day trifles, amusements, and follies, which occupy and waste the time of the chief part of this "worky-day world."

"I suppose," said lord Frederic Beauchief, advancing to meet the colonel and his companion, as they walked towards the kennel to see the former's 'capital pointers,' "you *deux heros de feu et de*

 flame

flame think breakfast, which has been ended an hour ago, a creature comfort which should be dispensed with; however, if you have any wish to gratify the cravings of a mortal appetite, perhaps I can help you to a little food, by asking lady Rosvellyn for some *miel aérien*, or manna, which, after a lengthened walk in the wilderness, may suit your sublimized tastes better than hot rolls, beef, ham, butter, and all the substantials of an English breakfast. I wish you both a very good-morning! Like, yet unlike Cæsar, who came, saw, and conquered, I came to Audleyhurst, saw, and was tired. My aunt scolds—one cousin languishes and yawns—the other goes away—sir William Langham proses—lady Hautville smiles insipidly—Melford talks incessantly—sir Gower rudely interrupts, and his son screams. Miss Waldegrave, poor soul!—well, good-bye, God bless you both! I am off for bright, brightening Brighton."

CHAP-

CHAPTER XII.

"He that resigns his peace to little casualties, and suffers the course of his life to be interrupted by fortuitous inadvertencies or offences, delivers up himself to the direction of the wind, and loses all that constancy and equanimity which constitute the praise of a wise man." JOHNSON.

"WELL, now I am happy," said lady Rosvellyn, entering the room where her daughter was sitting.

"Happy, ma'am!" returned she, "when we have so lately witnessed such poignant grief."

"Don't be so sentimental, Caroline," cried the unfeeling countess; "it is impossible to feel much for the sorrows of

people one knows little about, or at least who are not allied by blood to one's family."

"Pray, may I ask then the reason of the joy which sparkles in your eye, and overflows at your lips?"

"Oh! Frederic is at least departed; I watched him myself gallop down the park, and I own I made a declaration of never inviting him to Audleyhurst again, except in the spring, and then, you know, I am safe from the dread of his accepting my invitation, however pressing, as he never will leave London in the height of the season; and then, if I ask him once in the year, the civil thing is done, you know, whether he comes or not."

"I think, ma'am, you need not dread the frequency of his visits," rejoined lady Caroline, "as he told me yesterday he would never stay more than a few days here annually for the world."

"Hush! I hear his voice, I am afraid," said

said lady Rosvellyn, holding up her finger.

"Really it is not my cousin," cried lady Caroline—

> '——————Your imagination
> Carries no favour in it, but Fred'ric's.
> You are distress'd; there is no living, none,
> If Fred'ric be with thee."

"It is, I tell you, I declare, I think; lately every body has taken a propensity to chattering on purpose to teaze me, and drive my poor head to madness. Oh! here he comes indeed! give me that book; I will appear engaged with reading, that he may not divine the subject of our conversation."

Lady Rosvellyn seized a book, but never imagined she had taken up Tom Jones.

Lord Frederic Beauchief entered, complaining that he had lost a seal of some value; and while he sent servants round,

 above,

above, below the house, he walked up and down the room where lady Caroline and his aunt were sitting. At length stopping short before a large mirror, he exclaimed—"Heigho, Caroline! I do believe I am in love!"

"As all the time you are making this sentimental declaration, you are engaged in settling your cravat, and casting unutterable looks of admiration in yonder mirror, it is but fair to conclude the object of your affection is yourself. Beware of the fate of Narcissus."

"Nonsense!" returned he; "I really am devotedly attached to that heroic, clever, beautiful, fascinating Georgiana."

"Indeed! I am very glad that you have made so prudent a choice; she is now rich. Is it not rather odd though your love for her should be made manifest directly you hear her father is dead, and has left her a large estate?"

"I have secretly cherished an affection

tion for Miss Waldegrave," cried lord Frederic, pettishly, "for a twelve-month."

"I am sorry you are such a dissembler," said lady Caroline, "for certainly all last spring you counterfeited most admirably an attachment to lady Bell Blewtoor."

"Psha! I despised the masculine creature, and only liked to accompany her in the park, because she rode remarkably well."

"Then lady Charlotte Gayville?"

"Oh! she lays herself out so for admiration, every person she speaks to is obliged to gabble soft nonsense in return."

"Then Mrs. Clairvoye?"

"As to the jovial widow, she gave good dinners, and I wanted to get invited to them."

"Then lady Langham's pretty Lydia?"

"She used to ask me for compli-

 ments,

ments, and I was too good-natured and well-bred to refuse the request of a lady."

"In short, my dearest Frederic," resumed lady Caroline, "I could enumerate a hundred other ladies you have paid attention to, and talked lover-like nonsense of; your loves indeed are always—

———————'Momentary as a sound,
Swift as a shadow, short as any dream,
Brief as the lightning in the colly'd night,
That in a spleen unfolds both heaven and earth,
And ere a man hath power to say—Behold!
The jaws of darkness do devour it up.'

Really this is the sixteenth time of your falling in love, as you call it, to my own knowledge."

"What a poetical vein you are in to-day! Not a sentence without a quotation from Shakespeare!" remarked lady Rosvellyn, with a sneer, "and a very applicable one now comes into my head, which is, that

'The

'The lunatic, the lover, and the poet,
Are of imagination all compact.'

"Frederic indeed, as well as being somewhat moon-governed, is a versifier; and as he is now to support at least the outward character of a lover, 'sighing like Furnace,' I suppose we shall soon see various songs to the arched eyebrow of his mistress. I am out of patience with your army of follies, sir; as soon as one regiment is destroyed, another pops up, to fight against the rules of common sense—

'You're every thing by fits, and nothing long."

"To do you justice, my revered aunt, I must say that *you* are very consistent," returned lord Frederic, bowing, "and never change, or alter your fondness for discovering the little imperfections of another. But to return to the sweet Miss Waldegrave—I can assure you, Caroline,

'When I gazed on a beautiful face,
Or a form which my fancy approv'd,
I've been caught by its sweetness and grace,
But never till now have I lov'd."

"There, don't sing about it, pray," peevishly exclaimed lady Rosvellyn; "you wont let me even read in peace."

"What book is that that engages thy attention, madam? Is it the 'Maxims of le Duc de Rochefoucault,' 'the Triumphs of Temper,' or 'Mutual Forbearance?' To my eyes, indeed, the binding of Russia leather and gold seems wondrously like the Tom Jones belonging to the library of thy son and heir, my most noble, worthy, silent, and dignified aunt."

"It is," said lady Rosvellyn, colouring, and looking at the titlepage, "most certainly *not* the book I thought would be found lying on my own writing-table."

"What is it, aunt?"

"Never

"Never mind, sir; I am going to put it up in the library;" and without deigning to bestow a parting word on lord Frederic, the angry countess walked gravely out of the room.

"Well, I never thought I should see my old aunt act the part of the conscious lady," muttered he, shutting the door she had not waited to close. "Caroline, I returned here merely to tell you to write often to me, and never, remember, forget to inform me of the welfare of Georgiana, for in a few months I shall certainly make her an offer of my heart and hand."

"That is to say," rejoined lady Caroline, warmly shaking the hand of her cousin as he bade her adieu, "if one is not bestowed upon some other Cynthia of the minute, and the latter engaged in rattling a dice-box.".

CHAP-

CHAPTER XIII.

But with a soul that ever felt the sting
Of sorrow, sorrow is a sacred thing. COWPER.

. . . .

De combien de douceurs n'est pas privé celui à qui la religion manque? Quel sentiment peut le consoler dans ses peines? ROUSSEAU.

IT was evening before the carriage of lady Caroline Fitzormond, containing Miss Waldegrave and the sympathizing Julia Rivers, entered the extensive domains attached to the mansion of Valverde. The rich crimson of the setting sun gleamed brightly upon its walls, and illumined the dark hatchment, which, placed over the entrance, gave notice to the passer-by that it was a house of affliction, that death had cast its arrow

there,

there, and that it had been, perhaps still was, the scene "of lamentation, and mourning, and woe." There is an idea of peculiar melancholy attached to this last memorial of departed grandeur, which perhaps a monument does not possess; to see a tomb elevated over that "narrow house appointed for all living," and in a place appropriated exclusively for the dead, though a sad, yet is too common a sight to engage or rivet the attention of most people; but the armorial bearings of the deceased, affixed to the very mansion in which he dwelt, in pride of rank, and wealth, and pleasure—upon those very walls where once his voice resounded, and over those stones where once his careless footsteps wandered, is surely a striking and a mournful token of the brevity of human life, the nothingness of human joy, and the emptiness of human vanity. The house the departed dwelt in still remains entire; the trees still ornament the grounds;

the

the water flows calmly through them, but the being for whom that fabric perhaps had been reared, to whom those grounds, that stream belonged, is silent, unconscious, mouldering into dust, withered as the leaves of autumn, and gone to that "vast undiscovered country, from whose bourne no traveller returns."

Over the venerable oaks and majestic woods of Valverde the beautiful and glowing tints of evening were now cast; and as a thaw had taken place during the morning, different shades of green and brown appeared beneath the snow, that was still sprinkled in patches over the bosom of the earth. The waters of a large lake, whose borders were fringed with fine trees, now contrasted with the pure white, and swelled by the drifting of the snow, looked dark and gloomy, and rather added to the dreariness of a winter's landscape than to its beauty; but external objects were unobserved by Georgiana, who, exhausted by mental

and bodily fatigue, had lost the sense of her sufferings, by falling into a confused and unrefreshing slumber.

"Ah, Valverde!" thought Miss Rivers, "how little does your present possessor imagine that, once encircled by fond parents, and affectionate brothers, my happy infancy passed rapidly away within your walls, and now, after many years absence, I return to the loved haunts of my childhood, fatherless, motherless, brotherless, without a home, without a friend—a guest in that house which was once my own!"

Mr. Rivers had died deeply in debt, and after his demise his daughter had been obliged, in order to satisfy the pressing demands of his creditors, to sell all the little remains of a large estate he had left to her then-only-living brother, but who quickly followed his father to the tomb, leaving the unfortunate Julia the last survivor of an ancient and once-flourishing family.

Mr.

Mr. Waldegrave became the purchaser of the estate of Valverde, and embellished and added much to the size of the mansion, so that Julia could hardly recognize the dwelling of her forefathers, in its enlarged and improved state; but the boat of her darling Horatio, her youngest and favourite brother, was still anchored on the lake he once used to denominate his Pacific Ocean; and the parterres of her own small flower-garden were yet visible, though half shrouded by a thin covering of snow. There was not a tree, a spot, which did not recall the remembrance of some domestic pleasure, or some vanished sorrow, she had shared along with those whose ashes were deposited in the neighbouring church, which, lifting its humble spire to heaven, was nearly hidden from observation by gigantic trees.

"They are all gone, and why do I return?" thought the wretched Julia; "but they, if the blessed are permitted to look

look down upon the beings they once cherished in life, would surely commend the motives that inspired me with the idea to come back to this desolate home; for it was the hope of strengthening the mind, and softening the misery of the afflicted, that led me back to the house of mourning."

The carriage reached the door.—"Ah, those eyes are closed," thought Julia, "which used to watch for my return, after a short absence, with such eagerness and pleasure! but let me repress my own selfish feelings, to soothe those of this child of sorrow.—Poor girl!" continued she, looking with the eye of pitying benevolence upon the unconscious Georgiana, "she has known only the joys of life till now, and the wounds of her peace are recently inflicted—the smart of mine are worn away; but not yet, oh, never, never can I forget I was once happy here."

"Assist me," said Julia, to the do-

mestic

mestic who accompanied the young ladies, "to support your mistress into the house. I fear she will not be able to move without receiving some assistance;" and pale, feeble, and dejected, poor Miss Waldegrave entered, leaning on the arms of her pitying attendants, that very mansion which a month before she had quitted with the light bounding steps of health, happiness, and contentment.

Miss Rivers was well aware of the mistaken kindness which prompts the friends of the afflicted to endeavour to assuage the first inconceivable agonies, and control the first burst of regret and anguish, and therefore wisely resolved to express her wish to be useful, and readiness to oblige and sympathize with the sufferer, rather by little quiet, nameless attentions, than by endeavouring to rouse her from the still torpor of grief, by dwelling on the usual themes of consolation under the deprivation of friends; therefore,

therefore, after seeing Miss Waldegrave to her apartment, she left her to compose her mind by prayer and meditation. From experience she well knew that solitude and reflection are the best opiates to the mourning heart.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XIV.



"'Tis night, when meditation bids us feel
We once have lov'd, though love is at an end;
The heart, lone mourner of its baffl'd zeal,
Though friendless, now will dream it had a friend."

LORD BYRON.

JULIA Rivers was now returned to the home of her infancy—to that dwelling where she had drunk largely of the cup of innocent pleasure, and first felt the blessed effects of religion, in harmonizing and tranquillizing the youthful mind, when it discovers (and who, sooner or later, but does discover?) that human joys are often imaginary, always fleeting, and that human life, instead of being

being a smooth and flowery path of unbroken happiness, is

"A painful passage o'er a restless flood,
A vain pursuit of fugitive false good,
A scene of fancied bliss, and heartfelt care,
Closing at last in darkness or despair."

There is a sort of melancholy pleasure attached to the memory of joys long departed, and a pensive satisfaction in renewing in our hearts the remembrance of the happy and unclouded days of childhood, when the elastic spirits of youth gave a zest to every trifling enjoyment; and ardent and aspiring hope, then unchecked by disappointment, promised us fair prospects of uninterrupted happiness for the future; and if Julia's regret was keen, and if her sorrows became more poignant on viewing scenes which forcibly recalled to her mind every bliss she had once shared with her departed friends, she still felt an undefinable sensation of pleasure in thus being able to

see once more the loved haunts of her earlier years.

With restless eagerness she wandered over every part of the house not appropriated to the servants, and at length entered the library. It was altered and enlarged indeed since its tenant was her infirm and agéd father, but it still contained several of his books, the large table round which she had formerly seen so many smiling cheerful countenances, and the easy-chair in which the good old man used to recline when fatigued or ill.

Her tears flowed in silent anguish, as she gazed upon the memorials of a being whose precepts had instilled that religion into her soul, which, when under the pressure of the most heavy afflictions, was her only hope, and sweetest consolation.

Julia Rivers had naturally strong feelings, but she had been early taught to regulate them, in such a manner that though

though sad, she was never desponding; though afflicted, never complaining.

"My earthly father is gone!" she said, "but my heavenly one yet grants me his protection. My brothers, my friends, are departed, but there still remains for me a Friend in whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

The taper she held in her hand emitted but a pale and feeble light, but yet it was sufficient to enable her to observe, that many pictures she had been absolutely obliged, from hard necessity, and the fear of want, to sell, still hung round the walls of this desolate and lonely apartment.

If any person hereafter reads these simple unadorned pages, let them think over those dearly-loved friends death has separated from them for a time, and then they will easily comprehend the feelings of agonized regret poor Julia suffered, on gazing upon the well-known features

of all those beloved beings long since vanished to the world of spirits.

The portrait of her favourite brother was one inimitably painted, and resembled so exactly the beautiful and amiable youth, that his unhappy sister, as she gazed on the "lightning of his angel smile," and the sweetness and endearing benevolence which tempered the fire of his dark expressive eyes, was so completely unnerved by the excess of anguish, as to deem, for a moment, it was indeed Horatio.

"Perhaps," she thought, and the idea poured the balm of consolation on her wounded heart and lacerated feelings, "my darling brother listens to my complaints, and sees the tears I shed for him in secret.

"Pure spirit of my angel friend,
Although unseen to mortal eyes,
Perhaps you still my steps attend,
And calm the anguish of my sighs.

"Thou

"Thou wert, belov'd, to me the sun
That all life's prospects did illume;
But e'er thy course was duly done,
Thou vanish'd to the silent tomb.

"How bright, how beautiful thine eye,
True herald of a mind as clear,
Noble, and good, and great, and high,
Unstain'd by guilt, or guilty fear!

"Fair promise of a glorious day!
Sweet bud of paradise! now there,
Unclouded sun! thou'rt pass'd away,
And left (why weep?) a world of care.

"Alas! that death should hearts divide,
So closely join'd together!
Soul of my life, my fond heart's pride,
Gay blossom form'd to wither!

"Like lightning was thy course, as brief,
As beautiful, as fair,
Like dew, dropp'd trembling on a leaf,
Dried by the summer air."

She advanced towards the window, to endeavour, by looking at the beauties

 of

of the moonlight landscape, to still the throbbings of her aching head; but the view then presented to her eyes was one ill adapted to inspire tranquillity to Julia's agitated mind; it was indeed in itself abstractedly lovely—the waters of the lake were calm and clear, and the mixture of wood and water, hill and dale, were plainly seen, to great advantage, by the grey twilight.

The first object Miss Rivers gazed upon was the church, over whose spire the rising moon cast a flood of silvery radiance, so brilliant, that the dark tombstones in the burial-ground were visible.

"My friends all lie there," thought the miserable Julia; "their frames are lifeless, their veins are bloodless, their eyes are closed, and I alone, of all my family, have returned alive to Valverde, to see the graves of those I love, and to look on objects which must ever recall the memory of their amusements and

recreations

recreations when they were with me. Alas! I am ill formed for a comforter!—can I, who weep, wipe the tears away from the eyes of another? But God," continued the pious sufferer, lifting her hands and eyes to heaven, 'measureth the wind to the shorn lamb,' and has promised a blessing to those who patiently take up their cross, and follow him."

At this moment a servant hastily entered the room, with a request from Miss Waldegrave for Julia to come instantly to her; and by a wonderful degree of self-possession, she obeyed immediately, and assuming the outward appearance of perfect tranquillity, followed, in silence, the steps of the domestic, as she led the way to the chamber of her mistress.

Miss Rivers was a Christian, "in spirit and in truth," that is to say, the precepts of the gospel she not only felt and acknowledged to be the guides to

 eternal

eternal life, but implicitly followed its mild commands, and acted as she would be done by; it was not only while alone, and in her closet, when she found the comforts of religion, in soothing and calming her mind, that she owned that Virtue's "ways are ways of pleasantness. and all her patks are peace;" but it was also when called upon to act as the consoler of the afflicted, and the friend of the fatherless, that she blessed the name of Him who promised a reward for the good that come out of great tribulation.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XV.

In the thick cloud's tremendous gloom,
The lightning's lurid glare,
It views the same All-gracious Pow'r
That breathes the vernal air. MISS CARTER.

LORD Ashbourne had intended, on leaving England, to bend his course towards Rome, but various circumstances retarded, and at length induced him to give up the idea of visiting the eternal city at all; and after travelling about *la belle France* for two or three months, his parliamentary duties summoned him to London.

It was a beautiful morning, in the latter end of March, bright, clear, and frosty, when the packet in which he

embarked set sail from Havre, on its way back to its native shore. The wind was favourable, the sky serene and cloudless, and the bosom of the "vasty deep calm and unruffled."

The master of the vessel was a good-humoured, talkative, robust, weather-beaten, old man, glorying in the strength of his wooden-walled prison, and apparently also in the power of his own iron-spun lungs. He was, moreover, prodigiously fond of a little gossip, and talked, with great glee and satisfied pride, of the beauty of "his town" (as he called it) of Southampton, and the constant influx of strangers there in the summer months.

It so happened that the *unique*, *the original* half-witted lord Monmouth was on board this packet, and finding his old acquaintance, lord Ashbourne, was "bending o'er the vessel's laving side," apparently engaged in deep contemplation, he immediately entered into conversa-

tion

tion with the master of the vessel, who, flattered and delighted by having a gentleman and a lord to listen to his cursory remarks and little information, told his lordship a variety of anecdotes, and entertained him for nearly two hours in relating the events of his own life, with that of many other persons in his humble sphere.

"There is a pleasure to talk to such a one as you, sir. I beg pardon, my lord," exclaimed the honest, blunt, old man, won by the appearance of bustling good-will he discovered in his passenger; "you don't take one up so, as some of the great people do, and seem quite interested like, in all the consarns of us poor folks; and I dare say, seeing you have axed me so many questions, you would pardon me if I was as bold as to put one or two to you. Pray, can you tell me now who that is?" (pointing to lord Ashbourne); "they say he is a lord,

and for aught I know, so he may be; but he is a proud piece of sulky nobility, for sartin. He is looking over the larboard side of the vessel, as if he was somehow obliged to count the waves as pass by him for a day's work, and has never opened his lips for the last four hours, as if he thought the sea air would choke him; indeed, directly he entered the Fanny, after just spaking a minute or two to one young lady, as is sitting looking at the cliffs of the Isle of Wight, he walked to a seat as far away from every body as he could, and has been so cross, and ill-humoured like, ever since, I long to give him a souse in the sea, to wash out his pride a bit."

"Lord Ashbourne desires to know," said his valet, approaching, "whether you have kept the deal box dry, and in a place impossible for it to be injured by the salt water?"

"Lord bless you, sir! I always takes care

care of every person's things under my charge, high or low, rich or poor, and you may tell your master so."

"But lord Ashbourne wishes you," persisted the valet, "to take particular care of that box, directed to his lordship's mother, the countess of Rosvellyn."

"Hout! tout! man, if it belonged to the meanest body as ever lived, it should be looked after. Not a bit the more, I can tell you, young chap," continued the rough Jack tar, as soon as the domestic was out of hearing, "for its forming a part of the lumber of your high and mighty lord of a master." Then turning to lord Monmouth, he added, with a significant nod, and wink of one eye—"I could tell you now a good deal of scandal of lord Rosvellyn; he is a constant visitor to our town. If the son resembles the father, I know it would not be much of a loss if he was to tip over into the water, and drown

 himself.

himself. But there is an ugly squall a-coming from the south-west."

"Never mind the squall," cried the inquisitive peer; "but do tell me this story. I always thought there was a reason for Ashbourne's disliking his father to go so much on Southampton water."

"Bless your heart! I can't tell you now till that sail is down. Hurrah, my boys! Pull away! pull away!"

"But this story. I am all impatience to hear whether lord Rosvellyn was not attracted to this coast by the charms of some sea-nymph."

"My lord, my lord, I say again this is an ugly squall, and yonder is a bad rocky coast of ours; and I am afraid, mightily afraid, we shall not clear the Needles before sunset."

"Never mind, Mr. Simpkins; but do tell me this story."

"Then I can't, and wont, this stormy weather, my lord, and that is the truth

ont

ont—who knows but the Fanny may spring a leak? and then we may all be lost, every soul of us, men, women, children, horses, cows, and parrots."

The vessel, just now at the back of the Isle of Wight, and borne rapidly along by the wind, which had risen considerably since the morning, was every moment lifted up, at an immense height, by the large waves, and then again as suddenly precipitated into the deep hollows on each side of them. The noise of a variety of sea-birds, as the gull, razorbill, puffin, and cormorant, announced that a storm was gathering, which would probably, the experienced sailors openly declared, be a tremendous one.

The sky suddenly became overcast—the gale blew in terrific gusts, sometimes hushed into dreadful stillness, and then again, as if acquiring new fury from its momentary suppression, burst in awful howls upon the ear, and impelled the dark foaming waves with such increasing violence

violence and impetuosity along, that all the passengers on board the packet imagined it was hardly possible for the stoutest ship to stand against them for any length of time.

A few drops of rain fell now and then into the agitated sea, and low rumbling thunder, followed almost instantaneously by vivid flashes of lightning, added to the horrors and imposing solemnity of this stormy hour.

There were several females on board; one screamed, another fainted, a third fell into a fit of hysterics; but one, a beautiful girl of twenty, seemed to await her fate with pious resignation and tranquil awe.

This was the young lady the master of the Fanny had observed lord Ashbourne speak to, and she was his first cousin; her name was Delwyn, and after an absence of several months, she was returning to her native shore, to a fond mother, and an affectionate brother.

Alas!

Alas! with the latter she was destined never more to meet; the hand of death had already prepared its fatal dart to pierce the bosom of the good, the loved, the cheerful, and the blooming.

To complete the horror of the passengers, the master of the vessel stood gloomy, silent, and dejected, eyeing, with looks of anxious interest, the dreaded rocks at the west end of the island, which were still dimly visible amidst the deepening gloom, and to which they were approaching with frightful rapidity.

"I fear," said the man who steered, "the vessel will not long answer the helm."

"Keep your fears to yourself then," said the rough deep-toned voice of the commander, "and do not shew your chicken heart in such an hour as this."

The reproof of his employer, which implied that he entertained an idea of his cowardice, stung the heart of the

British

British seaman, and a burning tear fell upon his sunburnt cheek.

In breathless agitation, in silent overwhelming awe, the inmates of the packet remained for several minutes gazing on the weatherbeaten brow of the master, as if he alone possessed the power of life and death.

"In a few moments all will be decided," at length he uttered, in a hurried voice; "the ship will either pass safely by that rock, or," he added, in a lower tone, "she will be dashed to pieces against its sides."

A dreadful pause succeeded; some of the crew, and many of the passengers, threw themselves on their knees, and tried to pray; others, of weaker and more pusillanimous mind, in tremulous accents bewailed their hard fate, while a few, of sterner mould, gazed fixedly on the Needle rock.

"Cheer up, ladies! cheer up, all of you!" shouted the honest seamen who

steered,

steered, taking off his hat, and waving it three times in the air; "we are past the western cliff, thank God! and we shall be at Southampton in little better than two hours, if my name is Will Forward."

At hearing this announcement, that they were saved from the jaws of the deep, which seemed but a moment before to yawn to receive them, by one simultaneous impulse the whole crew and passengers threw themselves on their knees, and either wept for joy, or poured forth thanksgivings to the Almighty.

The vessel however was so much injured by the storm, that the experienced master deemed it would be more prudent to run for Portsmouth harbour, than proceed directly to Southampton; and accordingly, in little more than sixty minutes after clearing the Needles, the Fanny was anchored at a small distance from that busy town.

CHAPTER XVI.

———— Oh, dearest! think a while;
It matters little at what hour o' the day
The righteous fall asleep. Death cannot come
To him untimely who is fit to die:
The less of this cold world, the more of heaven;
The briefer life, the earlier immortality.

H. H. Milman.

The next morning was one which formed a strong and striking contrast to the evening of the preceding day; scarcely a cloud passed over the pure azure of the sky, and the bosom of the deep, calm, motionless, and waveless, had exchanged its dark threatening hue for the beautiful purple which tinges the surface of its waters in fine weather.

The

The wind was hushed, the air breathed softness and salubrity, the sun shone brightly, and the sea-birds no longer screamed and flapped their wings, as if they feared a storm was approaching, but flew slowly and gracefully on high, as if rejoicing that its fury was exhausted.

Immediately on lord Ashbourne's arrival at Portsmouth, he ordered horses to proceed that moment on to London.

"I can't conceive," said his inquisitorial acquaintance, the earl of Monmouth, who had accompanied him to the inn, "what makes you so anxious to get to Grosvenor-square?"

"I am not going there," was the brief reply.

"Dear, an't you? How odd! Don't you think your father will dislike your living at an hotel?"

Ashbourne was too deeply engaged in examining his watch to answer this close question.

"Shall

" Shall you go to the Clarendon, or the Pulteney, or the Brunswick Hotel?" continued the persevering seeker of news, and retailer of trifles.

" I shall reside in the house of a friend," coldly returned our hero, without looking up; then, as if addressing his watch, he added, in a low tone, " set it once going, I never can stop it."

" Perhaps though," resumed the unabashed peer, " if I call the day after to-morrow in Hamilton Place, I shall find you at your uncle's?"

" The duke of Knaresborough is out of town."

" At Brighton, with lord Frederic Beauchief?" persisted the tormentor.

" No, he is with my father, in Surrey," and again Ashbourne looked gravely at his watch, and murmured—" The internal parts must be defective, the mechanism injured, or it could not go on so fast."

" Shan't you stop at Oak Leigh?"

" No,"

"No," answered the other, "I am going on directly to sir Lionel Wentworth's house, in Savile-row."

Words spoken in a hurry are generally repented of at leisure. Lord Ashbourne found it so in the present instance, as the investigator immediately declared that, as it was pleasanter to be accompanied on a journey by a friend than to travel alone, he would go up to London with him.

Lord Monmouth's exterior was dignified, commanding, and uncommonly prepossessing; his features high, his complexion pale, and his countenance peculiarly interesting, as well as handsome, from a pensive, contemplative, and singularly-melancholy expression, which seemed to indicate a heart of sensibility, and a reflecting mind. Had Lavater gazed on those fine-formed features, which resembled those of an exquisitely-modelled Grecian statue, he probably would have affirmed they be-

longed

longed to an unhappy, studious, and thoughtful man, whereas, in reality, all his ideas were trifling, and he was never absolutely grieved at any thing, except when his craving curiosity remained ungratified.

"I wonder," thought our hero, as the carriage drove rapidly from the inn-door, "what could induce Monmouth to select a person of my silent and retired habits as a travelling companion? Surely he might have found some better newsmonger than I am to accompany him to town. What can be a worse 'minor misery' than to be condemned to a *tête-à-tête* with a man, who, besides having 'brains dry as a remainder biscuit after a voyage,' has also adamantine lungs, which are never tired with the exertion of screaming nothings in my ear, in a voice, the discordant tones of which resemble a cracked fiddle, with one note squeaking, and the other deep."

"Do you know," remarked the silly peer,

peer, " I have heard such a piece of news, so odd, so strange, I think it will interest even you?"

As he said this, he drew out his snuff-box, with a consequential air, took a pinch of its contents, and importantly tapped the lid three times after closing it.

" Indeed!" cried Howard, compelling himself to listen; " what is this extraordinary intelligence?"

It is really a severe trial of a person's patience and forbearance, to be obliged to be civil to people one dislikes, to feign a semblance of attention to the conversation of those whose minds are vacant as Hogarth's poor-box, with a cobweb weaved over it, and " who are duller than the fat weed which rots itself on Lethe's wharf."

" Have you heard from Beauchief lately?"

" No, his letters are always, ' like angel's visits, few and far between."

" From

"From the duke of Knaresborough?"

"Yes, one letter, which was written on an immensely-large sheet of paper, enclosed in a frank, (by-the-bye directed to Paris), apparently written to prove the truth of Frederic's asseveration, that his father's present employment was in devising a variety of expedients for extending the privileges of the House of Peers."

"But did he mention any thing?" said the curious nobleman, who was not gifted with the talents of a *celebrated counsellor, in a late celebrated cause,* at cross-examining.

"My good uncle descanted upon several; he is somewhat prolix."

"But I mean, did he write upon one subject?"

"Not exclusively; he touched upon many," replied Howard, beginning to be amused by the whimsical curiosity of his companion, and gravely searching his pocket, as if looking for the duke's letter;

letter, he continued—"I am really very sorry I have it not in my power to shew you this prosing epistle."

"Oh, you are too good," said the unsuspecting dolt; "pray don't trouble yourself."

"It would be no trouble whatever; indeed it would afford me the most heartfelt satisfaction, if I had the means of gratifying your curiosity."

"Perhaps, though, this piece of news I was going to tell you may not be true," pursued the other, with an air of grave reflection; "it was a report of the intended marriage of lady Emily Beauchief with Mr. St. Julians."

"I have never heard of the report, and should think it totally devoid of truth; at least it is not by any means probable, so sensible a girl as my cousin should marry a man who has nothing but fashion to recommend him. It is not at all," added he, "either a piece of news likely to please me, as you said it would:

would: to be allied to, or connected with a fool, is nearly as bad as being one—perhaps worse; self-love veils our own faults and defects, and keeps them out of sight, but the follies of another are seldom seen through the Claude Lorraine glass of delusive partiality."

"I am delighted to hear you abuse St. Julians so; for do you know," said the blushing Monmouth, in a tone of confidential communication, "I am half in love with lady Emily myself."

Ashbourne could not repress a sarcastic glance, and an involuntary smile of contempt and surprise—yes, surprise; his acquaintance was so very weak, and dependent on others for guidance and support, in his way through life, he absolutely was astonished that he did not see his own *foiblesse d'esprit.*"

Our readers, of course, will remember there is a well-wooded romantic dell in Surrey, called the Devil's Punch-Bowl, whose sides are so precipitous, steep, and

and uneven, that if a horse takes fright in passing the road which winds round its margin, and runs rapidly from the verge of the hill down its declivity, it is hardly possible to stop, or prevent its being dashed to a thousand atoms.

Our travellers, therefore, were inexpressibly shocked, on arriving at the top of this ravine, at seeing a gig borne along with dreadful velocity, by a restive and spirited animal, sometimes so near the precipice, as to be almost tottering on its sharp narrow edge, and then again wheeled forcibly forwards in the contrary direction; one gentleman still kept his seat in the vehicle, but another was apparently lying lifeless before it.

Lord Ashbourne instantly sprang from his carriage, flew, rather than ran, with eager rapidity towards the gig, and providentially succeeded in stopping the infuriated horse, just as the wheel was going over the verge of the dell; what

were his sensations when he perceived in the gentleman, who at that moment jumped from the seat, and threw himself on his preserver's neck, the well-known features of the earl of Rosvellyn!

"My son! my noble Howard!"—"My father! my dear father!"—were the only words which, for many minutes, their quivering lips could give an utterance to; but the rapture, the delight both felt, was of short continuance, when looking round, they perceived that the gentleman lying on the ground at a little distance from them gave no signs of existence.

"Oh, Howard!" said lord Rosvellyn in a hurried voice, "Delwyn is killed! Great God! my inconsiderate passion, which I indulged by beating the horse, has made me the murderer of my nephew!"

Before his father had finished speaking, Ashbourne was bending over his apparently-

parently-lifeless and totally-insensible cousin, and using every means in his power to recall him to sensation.

The ill-fated young man for some moments gave no token of returning animation; and when he did, his heavy groans, closed eyes, and hands clenched, as if in the last extremity of mortal agony, convinced his affectionate relation, all human aid would be in vain exerted to keep his spirit long in its frail tenement of clay.

Lord Rosvellyn, in an agony of remorse and sorrow, went himself in search of a surgeon from Petersfield, but who, on arriving, shook his head, and mournfully declared, that the unfortunate Mr. Delwyn had but a short time to live— "so short, indeed," he added, "that it would be cruelty to attempt to move him from the spot on which he now lies."

"Oh, Howard! my dear, my noble boy!" sobbed his unhappy and horror-struck father, "why did you rescue me

 from

from death? life will be insupportable, with the weight of the blood of my sister's son upon my head!"

The dying sufferer half-raised himself from the ground, bathed in the blood that issued from his side, but instantly fell back, fainting with the painful exertion; the look he cast on his self-condemning uncle was one of pity and forgiveness.

"One word—oh! speak one word to me, my dearest Edward!" said the agonized Rosvellyn; "say you will recover: you must—you shall recover. Oh! sir," continued he, turning to the surgeon, who was so deeply affected, that tears coursed one another down his furrowed cheeks, "I will give you a thousand pounds if you will staunch his wounds:" then again addressing his nephew, he exclaimed, in broken accents, and a lower tone, for, from the medical gentleman's manner, he saw there was no hope, "say at least you pardon—say at least you pity me!"

Ashbourne

Ashbourne wiped the damps of death from the ill-fated Delwyn's brow; and at that moment a bright flush crossed his pallid cheek, his eye unclosed, and, with the last strong effort of expiring nature, he raised himself in the arms of his cousin, and spoke in a voice—oh! how different from those light harmonious tones which but an hour before met the ear of lord Rosvellyn!

"Can you doubt my pity and pardon?" he held out his hand to his uncle, who grasped it convulsively; "my best Howard! weep not so bitterly, take care of, console my poor mother and sisters—tell that I died blessing, thinking of them—praying—they taught me to look to God!—fare—farewell!"

A torrent of blood rushed from his lips, as he pronounced the last words, and, with one deep-drawn sigh, the pure spirit of the amiable youth fled for ever to join its Maker.

The next morning, after seeing his

unhappy father in a more tranquil and composed state of mind, lord Ashbourne left him, to carry the fatal tidings to Melbury Vale, the residence of his widowed aunt.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XVII.



D'o giu pianta palesa l'aspetto
 Il difetto che' l'tronco nasconde
 Per le fronde dal frutto, o dal fior;
Tal d'un alma, l'affanno sepolto,
 Si travede in un riso fallace,
 Che la pace mal finge nel volto,
 Chi si sente la guerra nel cor.

GIUSEPPE RICONOSCUITO.

THE sun streamed in unclouded effulgence on the bosom of the transparent lake, whose purple waters were finely contrasted with the light blue of the sky that rose above it, when one day, about a month after the arrival of the two young friends at Valverde, they walked slowly around its banks.

 "Alas!"

"Alas!" sighed the repining Georgiana, "how different every object appears when viewed in gladness or in woe! this bright sun—this still lake—this magnificent prospect, instead of, as usual, calling forth joyous sentiments of grateful thankfulness to the Giver of all good, are all unmarked by me; or if I do observe them, I merely turn my thoughts on that day in which I last left Valverde, when hopes of pleasure lured me from a sick father's side, never more to return to him."

"My dear Miss Waldegrave!" returned the patient Julia, "deeply as I commiserate your sufferings, deeply as I sympathize with your feelings, yet I own the constant efforts you make to renew in your mind every melancholy idea is reprehensible in the highest degree; you contrast the darkness of your present fate with the bright days gone by for ever: shall I shew you another scene of misfortune, which, whilst you pity the multiplied

multiplied miseries of the afflicted persons, may, by leading you to succour them, bestow the balm of consolation on your own soul: believe me, Georgiana, and I have known what grief is, that it is the greatest alleviation of trouble, to look upon, and seek to heal, the wounds of another's peace.

"Do you see," she resumed, after a short pause, "yonder cottage? there lives a family of starving people; the father of that family is dead, and also his youngest child; it is indeed a scene of unmitigated woe—the widowed mother gazes upon her five remaining children, the eldest only ten years old, and sees the necessity of stopping her tears, and restraining the agony of her grief for the departed, lest she should be rendered incapable of working all day long for the support of the living—at one moment she looks at the coffin of her husband; she turns from that dreadful spectacle, and sees the little one containing the ashes of her blooming infant.

I have

I have been there, Miss Waldegrave; a mother's sorrow is too deep, too poignant, to describe; the children had all shrunk with a superstitious dread from the remains of those beings, a few days before they loved so fondly—the father's coffin was closed, but that of the lovely babe was still open—its little hand grasped tenderly the rosemary which was neatly laid round its form; and there was still such a beautiful colour in its infantine countenance, and such a smile round its lips, as if it slept not in death, but to wake again."

As Julia finished speaking, the door of the cottage opened, and the biers, attended by a few mourners, passed slowly towards the church.

"Let us go too!" exclaimed Georgiana quickly, with that strange love for the horrible misfortune generally implants in the breast of humanity.

When they arrived at the churchyard, the coffins were just lowered into the ground,

ground, and while the sexton was heaping the mounds of fresh dug earth upon the lids, the voice of the aged and grey-headed clergyman pronounced, in an impressive manner, the solemn words—"Ashes to ashes! dust to dust!" the young ladies stood by the side of the grave, and mingled their tears with those of the accompanying mourners.

Georgiana felt a sensation of awe and horror steal through her frame, as this last melancholy ceremony concluded; but Julia, wrapt in prayer, seemed, as she lifted her eyes towards heaven, to be lost in the contemplation of the Divinity.

The mind of one was alive merely to the terrors of religion; but the heart of the other, purified from earthly stain, felt only the glorious hopes, the longings after immortality, it inspires in the bosoms of the innocent and the afflicted. At length, one by one, the sable attendants of the humble funeral quitted the burial-

ground,

ground, and Julia, recalled to herself by the audible sobs of her companion, with a powerful effort, controlling the bitterness of her own feelings, by example, as well as precept, sought to shew Georgiana the possibility of "shutting in our breasts our petty misery."

"You are not aware, I believe, my dear friend," she began, "that once Valverde was the residence of my family. Calm and happy as I appear outwardly to be, serene and tranquil as my mind generally is, yet there are moments of uncontrollable anguish, when I cannot completely repress feelings of unmixed, inconceivable wretchedness: but I wish not to pain your heart by complaint, nor do I seek to open once more the wounds of mine; I am only anxious to shew that there are other beings in this world of misery, who have still more cause to weep than you have. My father and mother were people of birth and fortune, till, ruined by an unsuccessful lawsuit,

my

my only remaining parent, after the death of my mother, which took place when I was but eleven years of age, was obliged to sell most of his estate, and to mortgage the remainder. My eldest brother was a clergyman—the living attached to this church belonged to him—he lived there," pointing to the quiet retired vicarage, divided by an iron railing from the burial-ground, "and now lies in the vault beneath that very pulpit, from which he preached the tidings of great joy to his parishioners."

Her voice faltered, and became nearly inarticulate; she raised her weeping eyes towards heaven, as if for comfort, and went on—"I was young, very young, at the time of his dissolution, yet I still remember the piety and resignation with which he bore his last illness, the purity and goodness that characterized his life, and the triumphant faith, the bright hope of

of futurity, that soothed and ameliorated the agony of his deathbed.

"My father never recovered this dreadful blow to his happiness. He thought it was not like a Christian to mourn, and repressed his own feelings to such a degree, that the moment he left the tomb of his beloved Francis, he was struck with palsy, and his few remaining years were clouded over with afflictions of every description—he could not move out of the house without seeing this church—he could not offer up his prayers at the altar of the Almighty, without treading over the ashes of his wife and son—and his health declining, his fortune failing, I almost saw with a sensation of melancholy pleasure his memory f rsake him, and his sense of bodily and mental suffering diminished, by the gradual approach of premature old age—alas! childishness! One day, when returned from a morning visit, I entered

entered his room, and saw my dearest father extended lifeless on the floor."

Julia's voice became totally extinct, and clasping her arms round Miss Waldegrave's neck, she wept for a few moments in unrestrained bitterness.

"Do not," whispered her friend in the low tones of anxiety, horror, and sorrow, "proceed in your tale of woe."

"Yes, it does me good," replied Miss Rivers, "to speak of those who formed my worldly happiness—who were the centre of all my earthly joys and comforts—whether I mention them or not, they are always present to my imagination.

"I had still one brother; oh, Georgiana! all the affections of my soul were fixed on him—there was not a joy that did not lose its charm to me, if unshared with my dear Horatio!—there was not a sorrow which, soothed by him, did not lose its poignancy. He was one of those highly-favoured beings who are fitted

for

for an early entrance into the gates of bliss. God took him early, ere wickedness had changed the purity of his nature, or sin corrupted the guileless innocence of his soul. He was as beautiful in his person, as his mind was excellent—frank, sincere, religious, warm-hearted, kind, and generous—never shall I cease to look back with pride and pleasure to the virtues of my sainted Horace! Yes, I may weep that he is snatched from me, but yet also will I rejoice that he is blessed, beyond what the imaginations of mortals can conceive.

"A few weeks after my father's death, his regiment was called abroad—we parted—oh! why do I now dwell upon that departure with such constant agony of mind? where is he gone, dear, dear angel!"

"Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown. He was mortally wounded a few weeks after at Waterloo—his ashes do not rest here—no, my darling Ho-

ratio

ratio wrote to me that he was dying—he never would conceal the truth from me—he knew I must be acquainted with the fatal intelligence at last—I flew to Brussels—for weeks I watched over his bed of death—all in vain—he died the tenth of August, after the sanguinary battle, in my arms—his last words were—'Be comforted, we shall meet again'—he would have spoken more, but his eyes, which were fixed with such a tender expression on my face, became glazed—his hand, which held mine, relaxed its grasp, and when I looked again, my idolized brother was a breathless corpse, and I was left alone in a foreign country, with hardly one friend near me.

"Oh, Georgiana!" continued Miss Rivers, standing up, whilst her countenance, wet with tears, was lighted up with the glow of faith and heavenly hope, "let me say, as my darling Horatio said to me—'Be comforted!'—and when God sends trouble and affliction upon

on you, remember, that though you have suffered, yet you have often enjoyed—that though you now weep in grief, you have smiled with joy—and think, that whilst in this miserable world, your dearest friend will meet you no more, yet in heaven you will find, never again to be relinquished, the father you regret, and the lost happiness you sigh for."

Georgiana felt the unreasonableness of her own repining selfishness, and the sin of excessive murmuring against the will of the Almighty Disposer of events! and affectionately embracing Miss Rivers, promised, fervently promised, to regulate her conduct for the future in a wiser and more truly pious manner.

"You shall be my guide, my preceptress, my best, my dear, my only friend!" she whispered; "for you alone have told me truth, and you alone have sought to correct my foibles, rouse my emulation, and console my woes."

END OF VOL. I.

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CONVERSATION.



A NOVEL.

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CONVERSATION;

OR,

SHADES OF DIFFERENCE.

A Novel.



IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY

MRS. HERON.

VOL. II.



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CONVERSATION.

CHAPTER I

The mind will never be vacant which is frequently recalled, by stated duties, to meditations on eternal interests, nor can any hour be long, which is spent in obtaining some new qualification for celestial happiness.

JOHNSON.

SUDDEN resolutions of amendment are in general as quickly laid aside as they are hastily adopted; but it often happens that adversity corrects the lenient faults of the young, strengthens their virtuous principles, and totally eradicates the growing seeds of vicious propensities in their characters. It was thus

with Miss Waldegrave: a long course of continued and uninterrupted prosperity had gradually enervated her judgment, and weakened a naturally-strong and energetic mind; but, in the hour of trouble, the warning voice of her truly kind and judicious friend, led her first to endeavour to restrain the violent emotions of wounded feeling, by trying to emulate the amiable and praiseworthy Julia's pious resignation, and at length to examine the secret recesses of her own heart, and to set with serious earnestness about the great work of extended reformation.

The task was a difficult one, and it cost her many a secret sigh, and required many a powerful and arduous effort, to substitute, in the place of conceit, thoughtlessness, satire, and selfishness, humility, candour, watchfulness, kindness, and benevolence; but at length the severe trial of the firm integrity of her virtuous resolutions was rewarded,

and

and Georgiana became all her affection ate monitor and adviser wished, and fondly hoped to see her.

Her self-sufficiency was exchanged for the invaluable meekness and humble-mindedness of a sincere Christian; her overbearing and disdainful temper gradually softened into the unruffled gentleness of a religious soul; and the propensity to sarcasm and ill-nature she had once carelessly indulged, suddenly disappeared, when, casting her eyes into the dark recesses of her own bosom, she saw the numberless imperfections, the sins, the follies, the weaknesses, which tarnished the lustre of her talents, and shrouded the sense of her worth and good qualities in the veil of oblivion.

Her progress in improvement was not rapid; it resembled the slow and calm flowing of a river, whose course proceeds with regularity, and whose waters, never ruffled with the storms and tempests which agitate the ocean, leave

verdure and fertility on its banks, as they glide silently through them.

Mr. Waldegrave had died in very embarrassed circumstances. He appointed sir Lionel Wentworth the sole guardian of his beautiful daughter: thus, by his last worldly act and deed, proving the feebleness of his character in the eyes of the world, by making a very young man, whose family had no affinity to his, the director of the fortune of his unthinking child.

Fortunately it so happened that this gentleman possessed the virtues and prudence of riper years, and when on examining the affairs of his late acquaintance he perceived, that though not deeply or irremediably injured, the estates would require to be put under the hands of trustees, or, as it is commonly called, put out to nurse, for the remaining two years of Georgiana's minority, he, with a generosity truly noble, instantly determined, as the creditors

ditors of Mr. Waldegrave had come to a resolution to allow but a very narrow stipend to the young heiress of Valverde, to give up himself, voluntarily, two thousand per annum (nearly one-third of his own annual income), as under that sum it was impossible to keep up a suitable establishment for his ward, if she still continued to reside at the mansion of her inheritance.

With a delicacy at least equal to his generosity, sir Lionel Wentworth resolved to keep the whole transaction from the knowledge of Georgiana; and finding he could not well keep up two establishments, he determined on going abroad during the remainder of her minority, and letting his large and magnificent house in ——shire, adjoining the domains of Valverde.

It was not without a sigh of bitter regret that the good sir Lionel adopted the plan of leaving his native shore for two years. He was indeed alive to all

the enthusiasm "Ausonia's monumental land" is calculated to inspire, in the minds of those who contemplate its ruined fanes, and its majestic remains of grandeur long since past away; but he could not leave the tenants whose happiness he made his chief care, the useful occupations, the intellectual amusements, which employed his days at Revesby Court, without feeling, in a remarkable degree, the *amor patriæ* warm his heart, and melancholy ideas throng thick upon his mind.

Several months at present had elapsed since the demise of Mr. Waldegrave, and as he had now put the affairs of his ward in a tolerable train, he left London, with an intention of passing a few solitary days in ——shire, previous to his final departure from England.

It was a fine evening in the middle of September when he arrived at the broad valley which led to Revesby Court: naked, bleak hills encompassed it on every

every side, and, contrasted with the beautiful verdure of his extensive park, gave a singular appearance to the whole varied landscape. The comfortable and large mansion here burst upon his view, seated at the bottom of an acclivity, surrounded by gigantic mountains, broken into crags, and sheltered from the severity of the north-easterly blasts, by a gently-rising hill profusely covered with every species of forest tree.

As he reined in the bridle of his spirited charger, on passing the elegant bridge of three light arches, apparently constructed in imitation of the celebrated one at Florence, his ear caught the sounds of a feeble mournful voice, whose whining tones were those of female complaint and agitation.

Sir Lionel immediately checked his horse's rein, and listened with attention for a few moments, in expectation of hearing more.

The voice had ceased, but was succeeded

ceeded by low groans, as of a person in great bodily pain: he jumped with agility from the saddle, and tying the animal from which he dismounted to the stump of a withered oak tree, which hung its leafless branches in careless desolation over the broad clear expanse of water skirting the west entrance of his park, commenced an eager search for the supposed sufferer.

As he quitted the gate adjoining to the porter's lodge, he entered an extensive avenue of lofty limes, whose foliage, quivering in the cool breeze of evening, and shaken by the rising wind, was tinged with the rich and glowing tints of the declining year. The sun darted its last rays upon the fading leaves, and the long shadows of the departing day rested, or rather wandered, over the dewy earth.

Under one of these wide-spreading trees, sir Lionel Wentworth beheld a very old woman sitting wrapt in a dark grey

grey cloak; her pale hands clasped round her knees, and waving to and fro occasionally, talking to herself, and uttering various uncouth sounds, expressive of a mind or body ill at ease.

"What is the matter with you, my good woman? can I assist you in any way?" said the kind-hearted baronet, approaching.

No answer was returned, and the dame continued sitting on the bare ground, fixing her dim grey unmeaning eyes upon the green bank opposite.

"May I ask," resumed he, smiling at the strange unaccountable rudeness of the ancient female, "if the groans I lately heard proceeded from you, and if I can possibly be of any service whatever?"

The old woman neither stirred nor spoke, and sir Lionel, fancying her mind was probably deranged, resolved to watch her movements for a short time, and endeavour to soothe her into ac-

companying him to the hamlet of Revesby, at a little distance.

In a few minutes she appeared to exchange the listless apathetic air she had before assumed, for a lively restless dissatisfied expression, but still remained in the same posture, and groaning as heretofore. —" It is very hard," at length she muttered, " to be left all alone here so long, and no one near to help me. Oh, dear! oh, dear! what will become of me? A daughter, and seven children, and all to leave me to go out leasing! I hope they will gather chaff instead of corn, and cut their fingers with the reapers' scythes;" and she again changed her wailing complaining tone of voice for one of anger and fury.

" Can I be of any assistance, mother?" again asked the pitying sir Lionel, and he advanced nearer the place where she was sitting rolled up, and this time approached within a few paces of her.

The old woman rose hastily from the ground,

ground, and trying to put on a look of humility, begged the gentleman, as she was sure he was from his way of speaking, to pardon a poor, blind, deaf widow—"And I would not," she added, "trouble you, sir, with leading me; but my family have left me here alone for two hours, and, I dare say, wont remember, when they come back from the wheat-field, where they left their poor grandam."

"Where is your home?" asked sir Lionel; "I do not think you have long been an inhabitant of this part of —— shire."

"No, sir; I am a stranger in this here outlandish place," returned she; "I am come to see my daughter for a week, and she is so unkind as to leave me to myself all day, to go out and pick up good-for-nothing bits of straw in the fields, and takes me out with her a little, and then plumps me down in the middle of a high road."

 "I overheard

"I overheard you say," rejoined Wentworth, smiling at the peevish, unreasonable temper of the old woman, "that you had seven grandchildren, and instead of being displeased, it appears to me you ought to be gratified in remarking the industrious habits of your daughter, and the efforts she makes to support a rising family."

"True, true, sir," rejoined the wayward female; "I am over-sharp and cross sometimes. What's made me more so to-day, I think is, that I have not seen my good young lady this morning, to read my Bible so sweetly to me, or lead me so kindly and gently out walking, talking with so much goodness all the time; but I am a poor miserable person, sir; that is to be said in my excuse; and how many rich, healthy, with eyes to see, ears to hear, and feet and limbs to bear them firm and nimbly along, are cross and peevish? and how can you wonder then that a poor, blind, deaf, half-

half-crippled dying widow should be discontented and complaining now and then?"

Sir Lionel felt the truth of this observation, and sighed as he thought of his own melancholy and depressed state of mind.

"But what young lady," he resumed, "is this who is so benevolently inclined?"

"I forget her name; there are two, both very good; but one speaks more gay and cheering-like than the other, and she tells me such pretty stories, and brings me every morning such fresh sweet-smelling nosegays. Sometimes indeed she comes much later, and what makes me so anxious to get home now is, that I might not miss my kind lady. I can't remember her name: I am growing very weak and foolish."

The sun had just sunk behind a gently-undulating hill, which presented to the eye a grand and unbroken line of wood, and the grey twilight of a warm September

tember evening had gradually cast a veil of obscurity over the distant mountains which surrounded the deep vale in which the retired hamlet of Revesby was situate, ere sir Lionel Wentworth and his venerable companion reached the cottage of the industrious labourer, whose wife and children had called forth the severe animadversions of the latter.

It was a most commodious structure, with a roof neatly thatched, a green porch, covered with a profusion of scarlet beans and other common creepers; two or three hives of bees ranged round the whitewashed walls; a garden well stocked with vegetables, and a narrow gravel walk in the middle, edged with a variety of sweetscented herbs and flowers.

It was evidently the humble abode of unremitting industry and homely comfort. A fine child, with deep blue eyes and locks of curly flaxen hair, toddled out of the garden to meet "blind old granny;"

granny;" but on seeing a stranger, shut the little blue wicket gate vehemently behind her, and flew into the house to tell daddy of the arrival of a guest.

The labourer instantly came out of his dwelling, and apologizing for the rudeness of his rosy Jenny, bade kindly welcome to sir Lionel, who at that moment recognized, in his ruddy cheek and sunburnt complexion, one of the most worthy of his tenants.

After resigning his infirm charge to the care of her son-in-law, therefore, Wentworth returned to his own more magnificent but less happy home; and at the instant he beheld the contented looks, the cheerful countenances of the good and valuable peasants, he thought their confined rooms, their red-bricked hearth, their thatched cottage, more enviable far "than grandeur's most magnificent saloon."

CHAPTER II.

Freedom and simplicity of conversation are a debt to good-nature. SHENSTONE.

"I HAVE just received an intimation of my guardian's intention of letting Revesby Court, and going abroad for two years, Julia," said Miss Waldegrave, as she was sitting with her friend one morning, and working most assiduously for the neighbouring poor.

"Letting Revesby Court!" returned the other young lady, dropping the child's frock she was making on the table, and fixing her eyes with an expression of undisguised inexpressible astonishment upon Georgiana.

"Yes, he intends leaving the home

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he used to mention to us with such rapture—the tenants who adore him—the friends who look up to him—the duties he once fulfilled with such feelings of gratification, to travel over countries he has frequently visited before, and whose atmosphere, he declared, he never more should wish to inhale. You may well look surprised, my love, indeed, at this piece of intelligence," continued Miss Waldegrave; inconsistency is the last fault I should ever have imagined would tarnish the superior virtues of sir Lionel's character."

"Inconsistency!" said Julia, thoughtfully; "it cannot; I have no doubt but there are weighty reasons which induce your guardian to change his opinions, or at least to alter his conduct."

"Can he then be in debt," exclaimed Georgiana—"the good, the prudent, the benevolent, the excellent being whom my father's dying request bade me to regard with heartfelt sentiments of esteem, respect,

respect, and veneration? Can he have been deluded by sharpers, and led, in an unguarded moment, into indulging a destructive love of play?"

"Your imagination, Georgy," said Miss Rivers, smiling at the earnestness of her friend's manner, and the heightened colour of her cheeks, "runs away with your judgment. Sir Lionel Wentworth may not be in debt, or if he is, I see not the smallest shadow of a reason for supposing his pecuniary embarrassments occasioned by frequenting the gaming-table; indeed I cannot deem it at all probable that a mind, like that of your guardian, naturally strong, and cultivated with so much care, could find any amusement in the miserable occupation of the lazy votaries of fashion. Gaming is generally a pleasure to the indolent, but is always the detestation of a virtuous, sensible, and employed man."

"Sir Lionel is not certainly," Miss

Waldegrave

Waldegrave replied, "either an *ennuyé*, or a silly or unintellectual person; but the rage for play has often taken possession of minds the most powerful, the most cultivated, the most energetic; and I do not by any means think that it is the vice, or predominant weakness (call it which you will), of empty heads and shallow brains; indeed——"

"I beg your pardon," said Julia, laughingly, "for interrupting your observations; but I am really afraid that you are going to pronounce an eulogium on gaming and gamesters, and I should not much like to find you, my dear friend, the panegyrist of any vice, particularly the contemptible and inexcusable one of which we were speaking; indeed, I openly avow it to be my steadfast opinion that a *joueur* is either a wicked man or a madman, or else an unoccupied one. The temporary interest excited by games of chance, renders play always a favour-

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ite *chasse-ennui* of the indolent and the supine—

> "Leur ame vuide est au moins amusé
> Par l'avarice en plaisir déguisé."

"I think, Julia," remarked Miss Waldegrave, "that gaming is also much loved by the avaricious."

"Yes, of that class who are more eager to gain than to retain; but it is never the amusement or business of a miser," answered Miss Rivers; "there is a great deal too much money unavoidably obliged to be risked before winning, for a person accustomed to part with a guinea, or even a crown, unwillingly, and with regret, to find much enjoyment at a gaming-table; besides, *l'avare* is generally reserved, shy, and distrustful of honest men, much more consequently of sharpers; and the herds of them which frequent all those places of fashionable resort,

resort, is alone enough to deter him from going there."

"But all this," rejoined Georgiana, with some small portion of her former impetuous irascibility of disposition sparkling in her eloquent eyes, "does not give me the least insight into the motives which have induced sir Lionel Wentworth to act in so strange, so inconsistent, and to me unaccountable a manner; and I must again declare, that I cannot avoid entertaining a strong suspicion of his circumstances being in a very involved state."

"*Ah! ne songez-vous pas, chere amie,*" said Julia, "*que le vrai n'est pas toujours le vraisemblable?*"

"It generally is though," returned the other; "indeed, my love, I think appearances seldom deceive."

"Again," cried Miss Rivers, playfully holding up her finger, "you are too rash; you forget, if the world judged less from appearances and more from reality,

reality, vice would often be unmasked, and viewed in all its native deformity, whilst virtue would still more frequently be seen without the veil of indiscretion; one sometimes plausibly assumes the semblance of worth it is not possessed of, the other of foibles it is not blemished by."

A sudden ring at the door-bell broke off their interesting conversation, and to their surprise, which was at least equalled by their satisfaction, in walked the good-humoured, fat, bustling, loquaciously-civil Mrs. Wellmont.

This old lady was almost an universal favourite with the young, from her sweetness of temper and readiness to oblige, and by the eagerness she manifested in entering into any plan calculated to promote their innocent pleasures and various gaieties. To Georgiana and her friend Mrs. Wellmont however had shewn so much cordiality, that she had made herself sincerely beloved by them.

"Now,

"Now, my dears," said the good old lady, settling herself on a lounging-chair, and untying the strings of an immensely-large poke bonnet, "can you imagine what brought me into this part of the world?"

"That question, my dear madam," replied Miss Waldegrave, laughing, "is indeed completely unanswerable; but allow me to assure you that whatever inducement has attracted you towards ——shire, has been the cause of the most unfeigned pleasure to Julia and myself, by giving us the satisfaction of seeing you so unexpectedly again."

"Ah, my dear!" cried Mrs. Wellmont, with a benevolent smile, "you are a great deal too good to say so; I know, and all old people should know, that young persons generally prefer the society of those of their own age and volatility, than of sour, crabbed, talkative, silly beings like me, past their fiftieth,

fiftieth, and verging even on their sixtieth year."

"Sour, crabbed, withered, my dear Miss Rivers! Hold up your pocket-mirror to our visitor's face, and then let her gaze in vain to spy out one ill-tempered wrinkle, or one slight expression of peevishness, in that kind smile and open brow."

"Dear Georgy," cried the old lady, evidently pleased, "I am delighted to see the same gay and cheering spirit still beams in *your* eye, and animates your conversation, which used to sparkle there in the days of 'auld lang syne."

Miss Waldegrave turned silently away, and for a moment the beams of that bright eye were obscured in a few unbidden tears; when she looked again at her talkative but amiable companion, her aspect was as unclouded and serene as ever.

"I came here then, my loves," continued Mrs. Wellmont ("for, as you are determined

determined not to ask, I must tell you unquestioned), to look at Revesby Court; I intend taking it for two years of our old friend, sir Lionel Wentworth. By-the-bye, what a naughty idle guardian he is, to leave his pretty ward for the remaining years of her minority to act all for herself! it certainly seems wondrously strange that he will return to England the very year you must become, my dear Miss Waldegrave, lawfully the manager of your hand, heart, and estate."

"It undoubtedly appears indeed, ma'am," she returned, "as if sir Lionel had internally settled in his mind, that I was too unmanageable a person to pay much attention to his sage advice, and prudent remarks, and that therefore he had adopted the resolution of never attempting to have the slightest control over my actions."

"I am lost in the whirlpool of conjecture on many subjects," cried Mrs.

Wellmont, rolling her eyes, elevating her shoulders, and spreading open a hand resembling that of an ogress's in size, and garnished with talons somewhat like an eagle's. "As soon as I have left the Scylla of the impenetrably-solemn and eternally-grave baronet, my ideas are wrecked in the Charybdis of astonishment and dismay respecting that dear, sweet lord Frederic Beauchief. I always thought he was dying for love of a certain young lady who is at present listening with such a provoking air of sober coldness to what I am saying, and also leaning her elbow on the very newspaper in whose columns is written an abominably-vexatious paragraph, announcing the approaching marriage of her former admirer with Miss Delwyn."

"Lady Hautville, you probably mean, my dear madam," said Julia, gently taking the Morning Herald from the grasp of her *amie intime*.

"I heard," rejoined the other, assuming

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ing an affectedly-angry air, " at lady Langham's, a few days ago, that my sweet, rattling, charming lord Frederic was certainly going to throw his rank, his talents, his wit, his agreeability, his virtues, and his numberless accomplishments, at the feet of that proud overbearing woman; but I would not believe it, and ever since have declared— yes, positively declared that his lordship, dear, pleasant, good-humoured creature! was a great admirer of Miss Delwyn, who is a bewitching, pretty, nice, young woman, and I always speak as I wish."

At this instant Mr. and Miss Nugent were announced, and as they are strangers as yet to our readers, we will, in another chapter, draw their portraits, or at least present the outline of their characters in a slight sketch, to those kind people who have condescended to read these simple unadorned pages.

CHAPTER III.

Que de son cuisinier il s'est fait un mérite,
Et que c'est à sa table à qui l'on rend visite.
MOLIERE.

. . . .

Elle veut avoir trop d'esprit, dont j'enrage ;
Elle est guindé sans cesse ; et dans toutes ses propos,
On voit qu'elle se travaille à dire de bons mots.
Ibid.

MR. Nugent was neither a politician nor one of the literati; neither a coxcomb nor a gamester; neither mad for music, books, dancing, poetry, or philosophy; he was neither a great eater or a great quaffer, but he was the slave of his cook. He thought that to keep a good table was the ultimatum of happiness; that to have the best man cook in England, was far

far better than to be possessed of the largest and finest library there; and that to be told by his acquaintances—"Nugent, after dining with you, I shall never again regret having not lived in the time of Apicius or Heliogabulus," was praise more welcome to his ear, than if he had been lauded as a second Demosthenes, or another Nelson; in short, to use the words of the inimitable Moliere—"*C'étoit à sa table à qui l'on rendoit visite.*" He was quiet and unassuming in his manners, except when the subject of cookery was mentioned, when his gentleness was exchanged for animated fervour, and his usual apathy turned into eagerness. Naturally slow of words, however, and of great paucity of intellect, the poor gentleman would frequently stop in the midst of an enthusiastic harangue on the comparative merits of the Roman and French style of cooking, for want of phrases suited to bring forward in the argument in discussion; and his usual

 mode

mode of finishing a limping sentence, was in this way—"I thought I was right when I began, but you have made me forget what I was going to say; so we will talk no more about it, if you please, sir."

Miss Nugent was plain in her person, and loud and dogmatical in conversation; she had nevertheless some pretensions to cleverness and humour; but it was generally observed, that the shrewdness of her remarks was spoiled by their ill nature, and that she had far more flippant, bold impertinence, than real genuine wit. By the cutting satire of her observations, and the haughty disregard she manifested for public opinion, she was often disliked, still oftener shunned, though sometimes the very beings who detested her in secret, and abused and found fault with her conduct, humbled themselves before her, and endeavoured, by every means in their power, to oblige, mollify, and conciliate her. This could only

only be done effectually by allowing her to domineer imperiously over them; and the head of the sublime Ottoman Empire could not be more despotic in the exercise of unlimited authority than was Maria Nugent.

As soon as this lady and her brother had exchanged the usual forms of pleasure at meeting those whom in reality one hated, and the other cared nothing at all about, the conversation turned upon Revesby Court and its proprietor; and Miss Nugent flippantly remarked—"She was delighted at the idea of bidding adieu to sir Lionel and his peculiarities for the space of two years, and was also infinitely rejoiced that Mrs. Wellmont was to become her neighbour for that time. She likewise hoped that the 'Castle of Indolence' would receive her as an inhabitant in a very few days.

The other lady replied—that she was to enter Revesby Court as its mistress in about a fortnight; and then abruptly

asked if the report was a true one, which affirmed, that the earl and countess of Rosvellyn were reconciled?

"The 'hundred-tongued monster, Fame,' has for once told truth," said Maria Nugent, "as to the reconciliation, but I doubt has fabricated the account of the means used to bring it about."

"What then," said Mrs. Wellmont; "you do not perhaps think that dear lady Caroline Fitzormond, by dint of preaching to the sick, and exciting the compassion of the healthy, brought about this delicious peace, this happy forgiveness of injuries?"

"No, indeed; I impute it certainly to 'the small still voice of conscience,' or to the earnest entreaties of lord Ashbourne," answered the other.

"Then his lordship is returned from Italy," said Mrs. Wellmont; while Julia Rivers vainly endeavoured to conceal the emotion and interest this dialogue excited in her bosom.

"Oh!

"Oh yes; lord Ashbourne is with his father (who is, by-the-bye, I think, dying) in Grosvenor-square, watching over him with the most dutiful attention—*cela va sans dire;* and indeed I must confess, that I think the new honeymoon of lord and lady Rosvellyn is only nominally attributed to the influence of lady Caroline, and that the son had a vast deal more to do with the adjustment of the treaty of peace, and with drawing up the articles of general amnesty, than the daughter. How could the drawling, whiny piny, lazy, stretching, yawning, well-meaning, yet do-nothing lady Caroline, effect a reconciliation, when the efforts of the eager, spirited, lively, eloquent, good-hearted, well-judging, and promptly-acting lord Ashbourne, were totally unavailing?"

Maria Nugent sighed for an establishment, and to be a countess, she imagined, was to be blessed indeed; she had few pretensions to render her a fit candidate

"to achieve greatness;" she was decidedly plain, and by no means gifted with *grace*, or those minor accomplishments, which, if they do not make a woman more valuable, at least render her more pleasing and more attractive; awkward and ugly, however, she was agreeable, and "*elle connoit bien son monde;*" consequently her hopes, she well knew, were neither ill-founded nor visionary, when she fixed them on a coronet. She was perfectly conversant with the world and its ways, and she perhaps justly deemed that flattery would render her more acceptable than elegance, and that the glaring impudence of her remarks would pass for wit; for many men set up for admirers of that quality, who are not in the least calculated to decide upon any subject at all.

Lord Ashbourne was heir to an immense estate; and as his manners were rather shy and reserved than insinuating and "lively," Julia could not help fancying,

fancying, that Miss Nugent had formed a few wishes to be the wife of the earl of Rosvellyn's only son; "for surely," thought she, "he cannot really have changed so completely, as to be the very reverse of what he was when I last saw him; a few months could not have altered a grave, serious man, into a gay, animated one."

"But," cried Maria hastily, "I must say good-bye an hour sooner than inclination prompts me to do, for I have been paying at least a hundred visits to my '*unfreends*,' and have an incalculable number of cards of invitations to write before 'sober evening, in russet vestment clad,' comes on to warn me that the time is approaching, which must be exclusively appropriated to dress, for William gives a grand dinner to-day; and Emily and myself, if not accoutred properly by half-past seven o'clock, will not only receive many harsh reprimands for our dilatory manner of adorning ourselves,

but also find the fish cold, and soup devoured, and be obliged, *bon gré, mal gré*, to dine on the remains of a half-eaten leg of mutton."

"Maria," said her brother, roused to anger by the bare insinuation of his setting before his guests such a common joint, "I wish you would attend to truth in your stories; I should like to know when my cook, the best in England, got from Paris (he was the duc de Bouillie's prime upper-hand in the *cuisine*), ever sent up a vulgar, awkward, plain, tough leg of mutton at any of my dinners?"

"Never, never! my dear William; I meant the remnants of a turbot pie, or the remains of a *fricandeau de veau*."

"Oh! that is quite another thing," rejoined Mr. Nugent; "but I wish you would not be so unguarded—I mean so silly—no, so odd; as to find fault with monsieur Solive, who was, as you well know, brought up by the famous Beauvilliers."

"I must

"I must plead in excuse," said Maria, heedless of interrupting her brother, just mounted on his hobby, "that I am engaged in a multitude *d'affaires*, and you must be aware, my dear Miss Waldegrave, that it is a most laborious employment to send away nearly two hundred tickets for a ball, which three weeks hence William intends giving at Aldeburgh Castle."

She here, of course, warmly entreated Mrs. Wellmont, with Georgiana and Julia, to grace this ball by their presence, which they promised to do; and immediately after, with many protestations of amity, and sickening "*embrassades frivoles*," she departed with her precious piece of apathetic folly.

"Well, I am not apt to find fault, my dears," said Mrs. Wellmont, when she was again alone with her two young friends; "indeed I have frequently been told I am far too lenient in judging of the defects of others; but I must say (only to you both, however—for worlds

I would

I would not injure either the one or the other in the estimation of common acquaintances), that I think Mr. Nugent is an useless, disagreeable, nonsensical, little epicure; and that his sister is very plain, odd, satirical, assuming, and unpleasant. Bless me though! I ought not to indulge a propensity to scandal, and must hie me home to my present place of residence, which is the Wentworth Arms, where I am staying with my poor dear husband's sister" (here she looked as if going to whimper), "Mrs. Champignon, a very cross, shrivelled, old lady, by-the-bye, and who wont let me do any thing I like" (here she laughed outright); "but this inn I was speaking of is really a tolerable one, and the landlady, though she looks like the grim monster, Death, is prodigiously civil, and keeps a well-stocked larder."

"I hope you have convenient accommodation there, in every respect," remarked Georgiana; "and that other

visitors

visitors have not taken possession of the only habitable part of the house, which consists of two rooms."

"Why, to own the truth," cried the contented Mrs. Wellmont (who was always prone to draw a little comfort out of a great inconvenience, and mirth from every thing, as the bee extracts sweetness from the vilest weed), "I have the worst garret in the inn; but then it commands a beautiful prospect of the surrounding country—rocks, hills, woods, water, cottages, and all sorts of picturesque subjects for the pencil. I shall often sigh for Julia's talent in sketching, or rather to have her for a companion, my dear Georgiana, when I look at the beauties around me. But to return to my bedchamber: it has no fireplace, which would be disagreeable in winter, you know; but fortunately now the weather is uncommonly warm."

"Do not you find the heat intense?"

"No—far from it—it is very delightful;

ful; I enjoy heat more than the insect basking in the sun: well, but my *boudoir*, eating or drawing room, is a mere closet; poor sweet lord Frederic would call it a lantern, as it has a projection with three windows round it, which takes up nearly the whole of the cabinet; and if you will call upon me to-morrow morning, you shall have ocular demonstration of the truth of my assertion, that it barely measures thirteen feet by twelve; then the door and the windows (several of the panes of which are cracked) will not shut close, and they jumble together, making such a queer noise; the carpet too is ragged green baize, and the pictures hung round the yellow dirt-bedaubed walls are coloured prints of the four seasons, or rather of the most agreeable three, for winter is torn to pieces, and nothing of it is left but a sorry remnant of a cocked-up straw bonnet, and a tip of a long fur accoutrement, streaming in rags from the dingy black, or

rather

rather brown, frame: there is a fireplace in this room, to be sure, but 'the rusty grate is unconscious of a fire!' so my sister-in-law, who is the most chilly mortal existing, can act the picture of winter, walked out of its frame, to perfection."

Miss Waldegrave in vain urged Mrs. Wellmont to take up her abode at Valverde, till Revesby Court was ready for her reception; but before she had finished giving utterance to a sincere, polite, and earnest request for that lady's compliance to her proposal, she was hastily interrupted by her busy and loquacious visitor, exclaiming, as she shook her cordially by the hand—"Thanks, thousand thanks! but the thing is an agreeable impossibility, my pretty little Georgy, for I have hosts of servants, and I *have* a sister-in-law; now I know you are so kind as to wish to see her also, but indeed I would not tax you with Mrs. Champignon's ill temper for

for the mines of Peru, and all the diamonds of Golconda! she is so fretful, I assure you it is as much as I, an old woman, who have gone through her apprenticeship of trials of patience in the world, can stand; she is, my sweet Julia, as peevish to me as your cross cousin, lady Rosvellyn, was to you sometimes; but I promise you I do not bear it with such laudable meekness as you were accustomed to do. I verily believe now, 'she would die if her energies were not called into play by scolding,' as lord Frederic used to say of his aunt; and she must be therefore quite happy at the Wentworth Arms, where she may find fault just as she pleases, for an innkeeper and a donkey are obliged to be patient—if the one is not civil, he gets no custom; and if the other is not gentle, he is kicked with redoubled vehemence! Now, how provoking it is!" continued Mrs. Wellmont, "that I cannot put a single word lord Frederic ever uttered out of my

my head; and what is worse, I can't expel his image out of my heart, but I am determined never to forgive him, if the dear creature marries that grand, haughty dame, lady Hautville."

"Be consoled, my dear ma'am," said Georgiana, smiling; "this is the fourth person who, in the language of the Morning Herald, 'has been going to be led to the hymeneal altar by lord Frederic Beauchief, the——"

Here Mrs. Wellmont interrupted—"The most charming, delightful young man in the universe! he shall marry you, and you shall marry him, Miss Waldegrave, or I shall break my heart! forgive my impertinence—I meant not to say what I have uttered.—Oh! I forgot to tell you, my dears, that rats give balls, and mice dinners, behind the wainscot of our splendid eating-room; that the chairs are many of them tripods; and that the caricature of a fashionable sofa, stuck like a fixture to the walls,

walls, is decidedly ricketty. Good-bye once more! remember we part to meet again to-morrow."

CHAP-

CHAPTER IV.

When a person is in a melancholy frame of mind, such a melancholy as leads him to view the world, and all its pursuits, in a gloomy point of view, this is apt to produce a sort of elevation above the world, and an indifference about every thing that is going on it.

Lounger.

THE morning after sir Lionel Wentworth's rencontre with the blind widow Hawkins, he rose early, intending to bend his steps towards the village, to look again, with the eye of benevolent interest, on the scene of humble happiness and content he had the preceding day witnessed at the honest labourer's cottage; and also to endeavour, if possible, to add to their comforts, and reward their

their virtuous industry, by taking on himself the charge of providing entirely for the old grandmother, to whom they regularly gave every week a small stipend out of their earnings.

Our hero was a man of a truly generous and charitable disposition; he did not wait for misfortune to thrust itself, as it were, upon his notice, but rather went in search of the needy and the unfortunate, that he might administer to the wants of the one, and heal the wounds in the peace of the other, either by bestowing pecuniary relief to the necessitous, or the balm of pity, and benevolent sympathy, to the heavy-laden with grief and affliction.

It is almost impossible for a heart of sensibility, and a mind of refined, delicate, and tender feeling, not to find a sensation of indescribable pleasure warm the one, or elevate the other, in observing the sublime or the beautiful, the grand or the lovely, the terrible or the gentle

gentle features of nature; and though we are not presumptuous enough to take upon ourselves to say, that no sinful man was ever a sincere admirer of the still lake, the lofty mountain, the green meadow, or the simple flower, which embellishes its verdure, yet we unhesitatingly affirm, we think it in general a proof of an innocent, a virtuous, and a religious mind, when we see the eye kindle with rapture, or sparkle with the fire of delicious enthusiasm, while gazing on the attractive beauty, the varied scenery of "boon nature," whether in her awful majesty, or pleasing softness.

Undoubtedly, no person can be possessed of a very large portion of sensibility, who does not contemplate with unaffected gratitude, and heartfelt thankfulness, the bounteous gifts God showers down upon his erring children with unsparing hand; and, generally speaking, the love of "rural sights and rural sounds" is intimately connected with a taste

taste for devotion; and what purifies the human heart so much as prayer, or blunts the envenomed arrow of mortal misery, so effectually as heavenly meditation? When we turn our eyes upon the earth, and think on all its wonderful productions, and gaze on all its luxuriant charms, surely we cannot avoid to lift our hands to heaven, and look from "nature's works to nature's God!" There is something interesting even in contemplating the annual desolation of every thing around us—the leaves which drop rustling from the trees, upon our heads—the "sky saddened with the gathered storm"—the gradual decay of all the flowers, which regaled our pleased senses with their grateful perfume, or their gaudy colours—and the failing voices of the "feathered train," to whose songs we listened but a few weeks before with rapture; all these little things become of interest to those accustomed to see, in the death of the year, the emblem of

their

their own fate, and who look past the cheerless winter of the grave to a glorious spring, which will be ushered in by the reappearance of the "Sun of Righteousness," when the faithful shall rise from their earthy bed, and their virtues shall bloom in an eternity of bliss.

There is, however, a tender melancholy diffused over the soul of man, when he regards the certainty of his own dissolution, and perhaps when those we fondly loved are taken away from us; this melancholy is changed into a feeling of regret and wretchedness, as we wander over scenes which once, in happier times, their presence rendered inexpressibly dear to us; it is then we gaze on the marks of the declining year with pain, for, alas! we, in bitter anguish, think that those we cherished with such proud affection, will never see again another spring renew the verdure of the earth, until that awful day "when time shall be no more!"

Far from the thoughtless bustle of mankind,
I wander forth to muse and to reflect,
And cast my eyes o'er days left far behind—
Days, when my heart was gay, and calm my mind;
And now, though disappointment's frown has checked
The guileless transport of mine early years;
And though my cheek bears traces yet of tears,
Yet still imagination, fondly cherished, soars
To happier hours, dear friends, and far more verdant shores.

The summer gale awakes the balmy flowers
That slept in silent rest-unbroken night;
But can the breeze recall the happy hours
I spent in these, to me, delightful bowers?
Ah, no! when joy's transcendent flashing light
No longer warms the ardent heart of youth,
And hope's gay visions prove devoid of truth,
How vain, alas! fair nature seeks to bless
The soul of him—the victim of distress!

Shine forth then, sun, and wake the flow'ret's bloom,
And zephyr, round the summer roses fly!
Thou canst not change my heart's benighted gloom,
Or ope the hallowed precincts of the tomb!
Ah! when the mourner pours the fruitless sigh,

The

The bluest sky, the most refreshing breeze,
Have lost the charm to soften, or to please,
And the warm sun, so bright, and so unclouded,
Wakes not the dead, in icy darkness shrouded.

Sweeter to me the moon's uncertain ray,
That sheds a stream of silver o'er thy tomb,
Than all the bright variety of day,
The sun's hot splendour, or the zephyr's play!
Grief flies from crowds to night's funereal gloom,
There veiled from sight, to weep alone unseen,
Nourish the woe indulgence makes more keen,
Sigh for the loved you seek not to forget,
And cherish feelings of a vain regret!

Sir Lionel Wentworth, however, did not by any means think that the external beauties of nature were deprived of all their charms, when contemplated by a weeping eye, or in the hour of mourning; on the contrary, he found that after the first agony of grief is past away, to be alone in a fine country, is far preferable to be condemned to mix with unfeeling and careless worldlings;

 but

but the tempers of different persons are so variously constituted, that perhaps the prodigal cheerfulness of all around might to some give a sensation of unmixed, inconceivable wretchedness, by leading them to contrast the desolating misery, and lonely widowhood of their own bosoms, with the life and gaiety of animated nature.

The circuitous route which led from Revesby Court to the neighbouring hamlet, was one singularly picturesque and romantic; for above a mile sir Lionel's path lay through his park, adorned with oaks of vast magnitude, and nearly surrounded with hills, which swelled into bold and sweeping heights, clothed with woods, exhibiting the rich brown and orange livery of the declining year. On reaching a rustic building, he stopped to gaze upon his extensive domains, and heave a sigh of regret at the prospect of soon leaving them.

The prospect commanded from this spot

spot was one uncommonly lovely; the mosshouse itself was situated on a round eminence of short, smooth, velvet turf, and completely environed with young forest trees, and a profusion of evergreens, amongst which the cedar and the arbor vitæ grew with matchless luxuriance; the view was singularly beautiful—so quiet, so tranquil, and so peculiarly English, from the rich verdure of the grass, to the transparent stream, over whose sluggish waters several large weeping willows drooped their long, pendulous branches.

The magnificent mansion too formed a striking object, lifting its majestic front amidst the grand mass of wood behind it, and seeming the abode of comfort, as well as of splendour—of convenience, as well as of grandeur. The elegant bridge we have before mentioned likewise added much to the charms of this home view, and the dazzling whiteness of the stone of which it was constructed, formed

 a sin-

a singular contrast to the venerable beech trees in the back-ground.

It was a landscape calculated to interest the mind even of the stranger, who came to see it as an object of curiosity; but to our hero these lovely scenes we have attempted to sketch, possessed a "charm far greater than that mere beauty can give." As he looked upon the splendid mansion of his forefathers, the following lines, written by his sister, came full into his memory:—



HOME.

There's a charm in that word, and a powerful spell,
Which *I* feel, which all feel, and which no one can tell;
And if poverty dwells in that home, yet 'tis dear,
For the little remaining is treasured up here.

If lonely that home, yet around as we gaze,
Every object reminds us of happier days;
And the beings we loved, claim a tear from our eye,
The soft smile of fondness, half checked by a sigh.

Ah!

Ah! then, when its grey walls contain those most dear,
Whose hearts fondly beat, when they know we are near,
With what rapture we see the blue smoke curling o'er,
And around that loved home and its neighbouring shore!

If affliction and sorrow are inmates there, yet
Midst the tears of dark anguish, and sighs of regret,
We look to our home, as we do to a friend,
Who in mourning a succour and shelter will lend.

If death has been busy, and ta'en from us those
Who gave all our joys, as they soothed all our woes;
Still dearer to us is that desolate home,
For there, with those friends, we were once wont to roam.

Yes, then dear is our home, in affliction's dark night,
As well as in moments of joy and delight;
For memory casts her mild ray gently o'er
The lov'd scenes of our childhood, though hope is no more.

Immediately after sir Lionel quitted his extensive pleasure-grounds, a change of scenery almost instantaneously took place; rocks, gigantic and abrupt, reared their grey and fantastically-shaped heads, covered with moss or lichen, whilst upon

the summits of these rugged eminences, here and there a solitary mountain ash, or dark yew tree, was sprinkled.

As if to afford a wonderful combination of the sublime and the beautiful, the awful and the pleasing, after descending one of the most majestic, but most barren hills, round which a narrow road conducted Wentworth, he found himself, as if transported by the wand of a magician, in a deep valley, " sacred to sweet peace," through which the same clear stream which skirted his park, flowed in silent tranquillity along verdant meadows, and whose still waters reflected, as in a mirror, the tremendous rocks, which lifting their scathed or thinly-wooded tops towards the blue firmament, formed a grand and magnificent amphitheatre.

Again our hero's thoughts reverted to his sister; it has been observed with great truth, that it is not always the strongest mind which can divest itself

of

of grief; sensibility is surely always the companion of genius, for unless a poet or a painter received deeper impressions of the "beauty and fitness of things," or felt a higher enthusiasm than other men, and a more delicate perception of grace, or keenness of penetration in discovering imperfections, which to common eyes would be disregarded, there would be no reason why every body should not be a Guido or a Milton.

Sir Lionel Wentworth was possessed of an uncommon power of intellect, and yet he sought in vain to shake off the demon of melancholy from his heart; perhaps even he felt a sort of indefinable pleasure in recalling to his mind the image of his beloved Florence, and wished not to banish the idea of her virtues and her charms from his memory, and he felt, whilst wandering over scenes which her society had endeared to his heart, that the tears dropped in secret upon the graves of the innocent, soothe

 and

and console the regret and anguish which prompted them to flow.

When he therefore recalled to his imagination the lines poor Florence had written, when gradually sinking beneath the cruel attacks of a painful disease, and drooping like the gathered lily, fading before it had opened its leaves to embellish the garden where it grew, he felt a strange sensation of pensive satisfaction, when he thought that her troubles were ended, and that now she was happy!—happy as those blessed spirits who wait round the throne of the Almighty.

Adieu, adieu, ye visions vain!
  Ye dreams of bliss, farewell!
Ye hopes, I ne'er shall feel again,
  Ye're fled at mis'ry's spell!

I dare not cast my restless eye
  On every prospect drear;
Dark views of pain and agony
  Ar ; all that there appear;

And

And if with fevered, anxious care,
  I gaze on days gone by,
I see but subjects for despair—
  Gay hopes, but shown to die.

I see the shade of pleasure past
  Appear, by mem'ry led;
I feel the sun of hope o'ercast,
  And think upon the dead.

For it is dreadful still to weep,
  Yet hide the trace of tears;
To watch, whilst all around you sleep,
  Yet dread the light that cheers.

All night I pour the fruitless sigh,
  And mourn my ruin'd peace,
Wish not to live, yet dread to die,
  With death though fears would cease.

Oh! I am young in years and bloom,
  And yet I feel such pain,
That tells me—"Think upon the tomb,
  And be no longer vain."

Alas, and I could weep by day!
But then I dread to show
The tears that down my pale cheeks stray,
From dread of anguish flow.

But yet I will be patient, and become
More purified from sin—alive to good,
As with a rapid pace more near the tomb,
My trembling steps in mortal pain intrude.
What though at present anguish may consume
The faded remnants of a brighter bliss?
What though my failing voice, and fev'rish bloom,
Tell me I'm tott'ring o'er death's dread abyss?
Oh! may the light of faith still guide me to my doom,
And may the torch of hope the grave's dark realms illume!

Among Miss Wentworth's papers, after the last scene of mortal suffering had taken place, her brother had found the following little poem, tinged with her tears, and evidently written with a hand unnerved by illness, and trembling with emotion; to him it was highly interesting, for it proved that death itself could

could not chill or alter the enthusiastic affection the ill-fated Florence always manifested for him:—

Brother, though all around me try
To make me think I shall not die;
Though some may laugh, and others say,
I feign the weakness of decay;
Yet still, beloved, too well I know
That death will soon my suff'rings show.
I do not much regret the world;
Peace from our home hath long been hurled;
Yet still one source of deep regret
Makes me half wish to live there yet.
Life's fading joys, delusive dreams,
And pleasure's wiles, and hope's bright beams,
Do not attract my youthful heart;
I've felt their follies, feel their smart;
But midst the pangs of mortal woe,
My sighs will heave, my tear-drops flow,
Not but that pain I've borne, can bear,
Yet death will one firm tie then tear.
Oh, brother! I have loved thee dearly,
And shall regret thee most sincerely;
When living, tasteless was delight,
Like winter suns no longer bright,

If thou wert not, oh, loved one, by,
To see the rapture in my eye:
And when I die, and soon I must,
And turn to ashes, and to dust,
The only sorrow I shall prove,
Will be when sighing for thee—love!
Alas! thou ne'er wilt view again
This fevered cheek, and bending frame,
Or in my smile, or mournful eye,
Affection deep, though calm, descry;
Yet whilst on soft Ausonia's shore,
You gaze on grandeur now no more,
On ruins falling to decay,
Like her from whom you thoughtless stray,
Wouldst not thou weep when *he* might tell
To Florence thou hadst bade farewell,
And that her heart's quick throbs are past,
And that her eye is closed at last?
Wouldst not thou weep that one once cherished,
When life was new, and hopes were high,
Had, in the bloom of youth, just perished,
And drawn the last expiring sigh?
Thou wouldst—ah, yes! I know thy heart
Would inly bleed, would inly mourn,
To know that death had thrown its dart,
And Florence from thy presence torn!

Yes,

Yes, busy fancy still portrays
  Thy noble features pale with ill,
And then thy sister warmly prays
  That she might live to see thee still.
It may not be, and yet 'tis sweet
  To think thou wilt return again,
And view me in my winding sheet,
  Unconscious then of heat or pain.
Ah! could I mark the silent tear
  Steal trembling down thy manly cheek,
Then turn away, as if from fear,
  Lest I that cause of grief should seek;
Could I but hear that gentle voice
  Tell tidings glad of future joy,
Of saints who evermore rejoice,
  And lands where death can ne'er destroy;
Methinks this dread of coffins, bones,
  Would at thy presence fade away,
And when I heard those well-known tones,
  My joy would charm me from decay.
Yet though we ne'er shall meet again,
  Hope of my life! my kindest friend!
Think of that love that death nor pain
  Could from this bleeding bosom rend.

CHAP-

CHAPTER V.



If any one's curse can effect damnation, it is not that of the pope, but that of the poor." SHENSTONE.

WHEN sir Lionel Wentworth reached the cottager's wicket-gate, the little blue-eyed child, timidly approaching, opened it to admit him into the neat garden, at the same time murmuring out—"Father told me I was very naughty yesterday, not to speak when I was spoken to, and to run away and hide myself; so I am come to beg your pardon, sir."

As she spoke, the blushing cherub offered her rosy cheek to be kissed by sir Lionel, who, snatching her in his arms, almost devoured her with caresses.

"Did

"Did you come to see granny?" said the sweet child, playfully entwining her taper fingers, resembling those of a fairy, in the sable locks of him she no longer dreaded; "for if you are, after you have talked to her a little, I wish you would come and play with me again, for John, and all the rest, are gone away, and I have nobody with me."

Wentworth laughed, and promised good-humouredly to share in the sports of the delighted infant, who now applied her small hands to the door, trying to unfasten it; but as it instantly gave way, it is most probable that it was open before.

In the interior of the cottage our hero beheld the blind widow seated on a comfortable deal armchair, neatly dressed, and busily employed in knitting some stockings for her grandchildren. The golden beams of an unclouded morning sun streamed through the latticed window, and illumined the pallid cheek and

and furrowed brow of the venerable female, as her sightless eyeballs wandered restlessly round the room.

As the wind was uncommonly high, the smoke proceeding from the chimney completely hid what was passing at one side of the hearth, and for a few moments sir Lionel could not discern any other person in the cottage, except the old and infirm widow Hawkins.

Without entering the threshold, his pretty little guide had darted away to finish, as she said, her morning's task of weeding the garden; so Wentworth could, without being observed, stand at the door for some time, as there was only one person, besides the old woman, in the cottage, and she was too busily engaged, in a somewhat laborious employment, to have eyes or ears for any thing else.

She was a young girl, dressed in a long mourning robe, and kneeling on the red brick hearth, endeavouring to fan

fan the faint and dying flame of the peat fire with a huge pair of bellows. Her dark luxuriant hair fell in glossy ringlets over a throat and neck partially discovered, which rivalled in whiteness the snowy purity of her clean muslin kerchief.

"It grieves my heart to know you are working so hard, ma'am," said the poor woman, earnestly; "I cannot see you, and I cannot hear you; but by your silence, and the warmth of the fire, I am sure you are blowing it to make a blaze. Jenny, Jenny, my child, shut the door; there's a strange wind from that part of the chamber."

The young girl turned her classically-shaped head towards the entrance, and sir Lionel Wentworth, with rapture, recognized the beautiful features of his beloved ward. She also immediately beheld the figure of her guardian, and rising from her kneeling posture, whilst a blush crossed for a moment, and heightened

ened the charming colour of her cheeks, gracefully came forwards, smiling with unaffected pleasure, and, with an air of enchanting simplicity, warmly welcomed him to Revesby.

A person less truly good, and less accustomed to perform acts of charity, beneficence, and kindness, would have probably looked more confused and ostentatiously conscious, if we may be allowed the expression, at being discovered in administering to the wants of the necessitous or the unhappy; but Georgiana had lately been too much in the habit of executing generous benevolent actions, either to look for praise, or expect admiration, in fulfilling what she was fully aware was merely her duty.

As she quitted the cottage, accompanied by sir Lionel (who was much surprised, but still more gratified by witnessing the change in her manners and deportment), the pretty little child, hastily running after them, entreated

Wentworth

Wentworth to stop, and added—"So you wont come and play with me, after all? but can you promise that to-morrow you will?" Then pausing for an instant to recover her breath, and looking as if the last argument would prove irresistible, she continued—"If you do, I will shew you my old malkin," (her favourite cat,) "and give you two—no, I will give you three kisses."

Sir Lionel was enthusiastically fond of children, and often derived as much amusement in sharing in the gay, innocent sports of infancy, as he bestowed in condescending to do so; and quite pleased with this artless appeal of the caressing peasant, he not only promised to visit her frequently at her own home, but also to shew her several "fine things, pretty pictures, dogs, cats, and birds," if she would consent to follow him sometimes to his own house.

Georgiana could not avoid remarking that her companion's manner had wonderfully

derfully altered since she had last seen him at Audleyhurst. He regarded her with admiring and tender interest, listened to every word she uttered with marked attention and approbation, and frequently seemed on the point of speaking on some subject of such overpowering interest, that the words appeared to die on his lips, from concealed emotion, before he could utter what he desired.

If Miss Waldegrave was internally pleased at remarking the improvement and softened elegance of Wentworth's manners, he was not less so in observing the wonderful alteration manifested in hers: she was still animated and entertaining, yet the vein of ill-natured satire was no longer apparent, that formerly used to render her conversation undoubtedly more amusing to a stranger, but which could not fail to pain her real friends, and make them dread that her heart had lost the kindness and warmth of youth too soon, and substituted, in the

the place of modest diffidence, an overweening vanity, and haughty contempt of the world's opinions.

Her discourse was still enlivened by witty anecdote, and enriched with shrewd and sensible remarks; but she no longer said a *bon mot* as if she only pronounced it to call forth admiration of her powers of drollery; and she now uttered the cleverest observations, with the simplicity of look and manner as if wholly unconscious of possessing more abilities than usually fall to the lot of others of her sex.

Amongst other subjects of discussion, sir Lionel Wentworth spoke of those acquaintances in whose society they had moved together, and he informed his fair companion, that after the death of the earl of Rosvellyn, which had taken place a few days after the reconciliation with his countess, his son had changed his plan of going into Italy, and intended travelling to St. Petersburgh,

Petersburgh, Moscow, and through the Crimea to Constantinople; but that on account of his mother's precarious state of health, he had put off his journey until the following February, when he hoped the countess would consent to his leaving her for a twelvemonth or two years.

As he finished speaking, they reached the porter's lodge at Valverde; and sir Lionel Wentworth, after fervently pressing the hand of Georgiana, bade her adieu for many months, as she was going the next day to spend some time with an acquaintance of hers in a neighbouring county.

CHAPTER VI.

This weak impress of love is as a figure
Trenched in ice, which, with an hour's heat,
Dissolves to water, and doth lose its form.

SHAKESPEARE.

A MONTH passed rapidly away, and Mrs. Wellmont took possession of the magnificent mansion of Georgiana's guardian, accompanied by her sister-in-law, Mrs. Champignon, and a large establishment of over-refined useless London servants.

After visiting repeatedly every country neighbour within the reach of a morning's drive, that is to say, whose houses were situated at the distance of

 from

from ten to fifteen miles, the good lady began to tire of the perpetual movement and bustle attendant upon this mode of forming and retaining acquaintances, which, when made at great inconvenience and trouble, seldom, if ever, repaid the fatigue of doing so; and accordingly, when the merry season of Christmas arrived, she invited, with much genuine warmth, and unfashionable earnestness of expression and sincerity of heart, "her dear five hundred friends," to come to Revesby Court to break the *tædium* of existence, and to enliven the dreariness of "gloomy December" by their conversation, gay, if not witty—amusing, if not sensible.

There are some people who think that to be alone is to be miserable, and there are others, who, utterly unable to understand the discourse of their superiors in intellect, always like to attract men of science and wit to their abodes. Mrs. Wellmont belonged to the first-named class

class of persons, but not to the second; she regarded a mathematician with dread, a poet with horror, a novel-writer with contempt, and a distinguished orator with dislike; for she imagined it was completely impossible for a politician to "drink his tea" even without a stratagem.

Wit, if its arrows were not tipped by an appearance of volatile good-humour, she thought, made its possessor wonderfully disagreeable, and that a man of humour was as much to be shunned as a rattlesnake; however, if a gentleman, gifted with all the *dangerous perfections* we have here enumerated, had either a coronet in expectancy, or was blessed with a seat in the House of Peers, she used to conquer her excessive terror of being in the company of a learned or sensible man, and only remark, "It is a pity lord —— is so very satirical." It must here be observed, we have often known several silly women who think a

clever person must always be an ill-natured one.

Amongst the titled guests the amiably-disposed but weak Mrs. Wellmont entreated, with warmth and cordiality, to join the winter circle round her festive and hospitable board, were lord Rosvellyn, whose father had died the preceding August, and his lively cousin, lord Frederic Beauchief, who, far from having thrown his " numberless accomplishments away on lady Hautville, had quickly recovered from his temporary fit of *insane admiration*, and was at present in the calm of indifference, but looking out for some new divinity to worship with as brief an ardour.

The wit this young nobleman possessed no small portion of, was so happily tempered by the sweetness of his disposition and kindness of his heart, that poor Mrs. Wellmont had never discovered that he indulged too great a love for sarcasm; but the refinement and

exquisite

exquisite polish of his manners had rendered him so great a favourite, that she frequently used to tell him, with unsuspecting frankness, that she wished all young men were as good-natured, and could be as agreeable, without having recourse to satire to season the general insipidity of their conversation.

When first she made this declaration, lord Frederic imagined she was quizzing him, for his conscience pleaded guilty to the crime of severity of observation, and some little degree of censoriousness in his manner of judging the world; but she repeated it so often, and always with so unembarrassed an air and open a countenance, that he began to give the old lady the credit of being half in earnest in her professions of admiration and absurd affection for him.

Mrs. Wellmont was sitting, one morning, looking over a new novel, yawning, idle, and *désœuvrée* (for she never could become acquainted with the art of

amusing or occupying herself; and when she took up a book, *pour passer le tems*, generally gazed on the pages till the lines danced before her eyes, and she was utterly ignorant whether it was a sermon or a poem that she held in her hand, when his lordship entered the apartment, hastily exclaiming—"I have seen her, the lovely, bewitching, enchanting destroyer of my peace."

"Lady Hautville, my dearest lord?" cried Mrs. Wellmont, with some little trepidation, and in sorrowful anticipation of the reply.

"Lady Hautville!" repeated he, with a sneer of contempt wreathing his lip, and a gleam of disdain sparkling from his dark expressive eye. "Can you have so mean an opinion of my taste or judgment, as to think I could call that compound of rouge, white paint, false hair, insipidity, and affected manners, the destroyer of *my* peace, the enslaver of my affections?"

"La!

"La! how odd! I believe lady Hautville is reckoned very beautiful, and she is undoubtedly prodigiously flattered, followed, and admired."

"The bloom of Ninon and other cosmetics, her purchased teeth and borrowed ringlets, serve to render her still handsome, though no longer young; therefore she is flattered, therefore she is admired, and if she was one of the Furies—ay, or even Medusa herself, her riches would induce every moneyless coxcomb, every ruined idiot, to follow and to beset her with insipid speeches, unmeaning gallantries, and loveless love-letters."

"*Les obligeans diseurs d'inutiles paroles*, are always to be found to tell a woman she is pretty, or to remind her that she is wealthy."

"La! lord Frederic! you are the strangest mortal! I used to think (indeed every body said it would be a match) that you admired lady Hautville uncommonly; but I suppose it was all make-believe," returned the other,

staring in astonishment, for she was not yet aware of the versatility or the volatility of her titled idol.

"I admire the cold snow that glitters over the bosom of the earth—I admire the blue sky, the lofty mountain, the rapid river, the tremendous cataract—I admire the voice of Miss Stephens, the brilliant execution of Kalkbrenner, the work of Miss Linwood, the painting of Wilkie; but I do not love these inanimate things—these talented people. No, though I might gaze with admiration on the symmetrical majesty of lady Hautville, believe me, Mrs. Wellmont, it was of that sort which 'plays round the head, but ne'er can reach the heart."

Here Frederic stopped abruptly, and, in a theatrical attitude, stood with his hand pressed to his side.

"I wish you would not discourse such eloquent nonsense," said lord Rosvellyn, who was quietly seated in a recess with several maps before him, "or come so near this table, as I fear you will throw

England

England from the top of all the other nations, and trample its laws under foot" (here he took up Bacon's Abridgement), "and that Russia also will burn with fervent heat. I would thank you for that screen, doctor Freeman; the fire scorches as if a frost was near."

"There now," said Beauchief, as his cousin again took up a book and began to read, "I wish you did not, Howard, live in a world of your own, but would condescend, now and then, to enter into the conversation of those mortals who are contented with their own humble sphere of existence. I would advise you,

'Ne point aller chercher ce qu'on fait dans la lune,
Mais vous mêlez un peu de ce qu'on fait chez vous.'"

"Well, but, my dear lord Frederic," interrupted Mrs. Wellmont, "though I am delighted to hear you admired the fair widow, without loving her, I hope you will forgive me if I say I think you are very imprudent to play with edge-tools."

 "True,"

"True," said Howard, calmly; "a feigned passion often becomes a genuine one, and I have frequently heard it mentioned, that those people who counterfeit fits, often, by mere force of habit, are at length visited by real ones."

"Gracious powers! Good Heavens! you do not mean to insinuate that your cousin," cried the alarmed Mrs. Wellmont, "ever had epileptic fits; do you, lord Rosvellyn?"

"No, my dear madam," resumed the earl, smiling; "I was merely alluding to his short-lived attachments—to a disease of the heart."

"Of the heart? Bless me! you do not think it is ossifying? Oh! I see you are meaning quite another thing now," replied the good lady, colouring with vexation.

"Quite; he meant to say," said lord Frederic, affectedly, "that my heart was too sensible to tender impressions. Heigh-ho! I am quite low-spirited!"

"Ah!

"Ah! now remember my advice, my dear lord," remarked Mrs. Wellmont, "and do not fall in love."

"What, you think it better to fall off a horse than into love?" observed a gentleman, carelessly arranging his neckcloth before a mirror.

"Oh! trust me, my dear ma'am," drawled lord Frederic, throwing himself on a sofa, and taking reiterated pinches of snuff all the time he was speaking, with an air of infinite *nonchalance*, "I am no moth; I am not so infatuated as even to singe my wings, or, to drop the metaphor, hurt my feelings by approaching too near Cupid's flame."

"You are indeed," said lord Rosvellyn, gravely smiling as he lifted his eyes from the book he was attentively perusing, 'an *ignis-fatuus* dream of love.' My dear Frederic, may I ask when you intend to leave off this constant gliding from fair to fair?"

"When you cease, my beloved How-

 ard,

ard, to personate the knight of the sorrowful countenance.—Ah! my dear St. Julians, I am delighted to see the reflection of your figure in yonder mirror," said he, addressing that gentleman, who was still in earnest contemplation of the position of his cravat, "for now we can have the pleasure of seeing a single combat."

"A duel, *Ciel!* Beauchief, what the devil do you mean?" murmured the dismayed coxcomb, affectedly shrinking away as his lordship approached.

"Why, there is don Quixote," cried Frederic, laughing heartily. "And are not you the knight of the looking-glasses, or of the moon?—for his face resembles one," continued he, in a whisper.

"Ah! how I wish," said the well-meaning but ill-judging Mrs. Wellmont, "that you could, lord Rosvellyn, find gaiety and vivacity as quickly caught as the typhus fever."

Then

Then suddenly recollecting that this disease was the one which had proved fatal to the earl's father barely four months before, she stood abashed and confounded.

"Do not you think sins of negligence almost equal to premeditated ones?" whispered lord Frederic to doctor Freeman, an old dean, of portly appearance, round cheeks, and gouty fingers, which were at that moment elevated towards his broad unmeaning forehead, with the intention of keeping on a pair of huge silver-mounted spectacles.

"Humph! why, not exactly," returned the divine, who was an inveterate proser, in a grave, decided, magisterial, loud, and important tone of voice, "not exactly, my dear lord Frederic Beauchief; but we should carefully endeavour to guard against the first approaches of the smallest shadow of evil, lest——"

Here he coughed, and the young nobleman, seeing his face buried in his enormously-

enormously-large red and yellow silk handkerchief, whispered to the person next him, who happened to be lady Langham—"We should guard against the slightest propensity to prosing, lest we should become the *bête noire* of good society."

"Lest," resumed the hoarse, half-suffocated dean, "the darkness of greater wickedness should obscure the lustre of our amiable qualities."

"My Lydia says he is insufferable," murmured lady Langham, "and used to declare he lived to eat, and did not eat to live."

"Inimitable!" said Frederic, elevating his eyebrows, and, as soon as possible, shifted his quarters, and walked away as far as he could from the empty-headed discussing doctor and the manœuvring mother.

"My dear Miss Langham, allow me to take that heavy music-book from your hands," said he, advancing towards that young

young lady, who was carrying an immense folio of "Moore's Irish Melodies" across the room. "Where shall I place it? upon the piano? Oh! on the harp; ah! I am delighted at that, for I have not heard its melodious tones since I came into this land of *flats*" (looking at Mr. St. Julians) "and *sharps*" (eyeing Mrs. Champignon).

'The harp that once in Tara's halls
The soul of music shed,
Now hangs as mute on Tara's walls,
As if that soul were fled.'

But *you* are now here, and I am sure you will repay '*mes petits soins*' by singing one *little* song; it is the 'Last Rose of Summer,' if you please," continued he, turning over the pages of the music-book he had placed on the harp-stand.

The fair languishing Lydia commenced, with various affected grimaces and laughable

laughable *minauderies*, to seat herself at the instrument, waving her head to and fro, as if in ecstatic admiration of her own little shrill screams, and opening, rolling, and shutting a pair of large round expressionless blue eyes, as she proceeded in executing the symphony of the song. Then, just as she had severed her coral lips, "like to a cherry seeming parted," sufficiently to display the rows of pearl within them, she exclaimed, with an air of overacted humility, and a look of beseeching affectation at lord Frederic, who was leaning in an elegant, though somewhat studied attitude over the harp, that indeed she was not equal to it; that her voice had no pretensions to sweetness whatever; and that she always felt so melancholy, so very miserable, when singing a plaintive strain, that she could hardly restrain her tears.

Frederic, though internally disgusted at her silly behaviour, disliking any body to act all lady Heron's manœuvres to

shew

shew her arm and figure, as well as manners, to advantage, and perfectly conscious that Miss Langham had no pretensions either to grace or modesty, *et qu'elle étoit la plus maussade petite créature d'une indolence—d'une langueur,* which was extremely disagreeable to him, replied, as he saw she wished to be flattered—"Amiable sensibility! bewitching humility! but who that has ever heard your melodious voice but remembers the expressive fascination of its heart-thrilling tones?"

Encouraged by the deceitful smiles and insincere compliments of lord Frederic, the gentle Lydia, with downcast eyes, and cheeks blooming with health, but, alas! not tinged with the eloquent blush of modesty or diffidence, began and ended the beautiful song. She looked languidly up, to cast an irresistibly-tender glance at the young nobleman, as well as to see what effect her melting strains had produced on him, when she beheld,

beheld, to her unspeakable vexation, anger, and mortification, that her pretended adorer, or, to use more modern language, her admirer, was leaning over the harp with a preoccupied air and absent mind; his thoughts were plainly fixed

> " On that too transcendent vision,
> When heart meets heart again in dreams Elysian ;"

and, alas! it was too visible that the " fascination of her heart-thrilling tones" met an inattentive and regardless ear.

The harp-strings were touched with a tremulous hand; its notes ceased to vibrate. Miss Langham closed her music-book—she arose—she walked with sulky solemnity away to join her mother, yet,

> " Oft as she went, she backward turn'd her view,
> And bade that *youth* and *flatt'ry sweet* adieu!
> *Unhappy maid!* to other seats remove—
> To other scenes of *disappointed love.*

Go,

Go, leave the *gilded harp* and *coxcomb's* strain,
With *envy languish, yet thy wrath refrain*
To shew, for ev'ry man dislikes a wife
Whose looks may shew propensity to strife."

Lord Frederic, in the mean time, neither heard the termination of the Irish melody, or thanked the young lady for the *arduous efforts* she had made use of to please or attract him, but, with eyes fixed on a piece of paper he held in his hand, seemed to have lost his intellects in a fit of poetical insanity. He kissed the letter, murmured "lovely Georgiana," read some lines aloud to himself, and then approaching the earl of Rosvellyn, insisted on repeating the verses to him. They were by no means good—indeed were evidently written in a hurried manner; but, as Miss Waldegrave's name was attached to them, lord Frederic chose to imagine them possessed of some poetical beauty.

"I have just found this precious paper in

in the Aphorisms of sir Philip Sidney," said he, as he advanced towards his cousin.

"What precious paper do you mean pray?" returned the earl, coolly, without looking up from the maps before him.

"Did you ever see so beautiful a hand," pursued the other, neither deigning to reply to the question, nor caring for shaking the table, to the great annoyance of the gentleman writing at it—"so free, so clear—every letter so accurately formed?—a fairy—no, even the elegant Titania herself, could not write so charming a hand."

"Who are you talking of?" returned Howard, peevishly, somewhat discomposed by his tormenting relation.

"There, do not look so very like my aunt," cried Beauchief, sneeringly: "now prithee cease to outstare the lightning, or creep into the jaundice by being peevish. These lines, these precious lines, were written by Georgiana."

"Who

"Who do you say?" asked Howard, gravely employed in chalking out the best way to St. Petersburgh, where he intended going.

"By Miss Waldegrave? Very well; read them some other time; not now, for Heaven's sake! or I shall not get farther than Cracow before dinner."

"I would not put off shewing this specimen of her poetical talents to you a minute longer for the world," cried the impetuous lord Frederic, and with a very overstrained emphasis and sing-song sort of manner, he read the following production to the inattentive lord Rosvellyn, who internally wished his cousin out of the room, and the little poem in the blazing fire.

"When Death triumphant shook his fatal dart
O'er Sidney's head, and pierc'd his noble heart;
When his warm veins pour'd forth the crimson tide,
Proceeding from, and tinging all his side;
Fainting with pain, his patient eye he turn'd
On those who wept as they that pain discern'd

More

More from his pallid cheek, damp brow, sunk eye,
Than by his groans of mortal agony;
And feebly smil'd in grateful love around,
Whilst lying on the blood-besprinkled ground;
As one approach'd to give a flowing bowl
Of nature's bev'rage to revive his soul,
He took the cup, and, thankful for the draught,
Just touched his parched dry lip, and slightly quaffed;
Then stopped; his dim eye still could see
One wounded soldier's look of agony.
He paused—then calmly gave the bowl away,
Half rais'd his form, and gather'd strength to say—
"His fate is worse than mine, his courage less;
Give to his wants, 'twill my last moments bless;"
Then closed his placid eyes, sunk back, and sighed,
Op'd those meek eyes once more—and Sidney died!"

"How do you like these lines, my dear fellow, hegh?" said Frederic, hastily.

"For the composition of a flighty, odd, indolent girl of nineteen, I think them tolerable," rejoined the earl, yawning; "for, to own the truth, I have not formed a very favourable opinion of Miss Waldegrave's

Waldegrave's heart, disposition, or manners, during her short residence at Audleyhurst."

"Flighty, odd, indolent!" cried his cousin, his eyes sparkling with indignation, and his cheek burning with "eloquent blood;" "she is the most truly-amiable, accomplished, and fascinating person in existence—worth all the serio-ludicro Miss Julias in the world. Miss Rivers is only calculated to play lady Grace 'sitting under a tree,' or bearing, like a laden camel, or a Patience Grizzle, all the slights, taunts, and impertinent reproaches a 'certain person in a certain world' chooses to heap upon her."

"Desist, Frederic," said Rosvellyn, sternly, "from mentioning the misfortunes of the best, the most amiable and praiseworthy of her sex, in so disrespectful and so unfeeling a manner—yes, unfeeling. You know how great were her afflictions and her trials, how nobly she has borne them, and also how fondly she is,

is, and ever will be loved and esteemed by me. I did not expect that you, to whom I confided the secret of my attachment and her rejection, would ——"

"Forgive me, my dear, my very dearest Howard," said lord Frederic, quite miserable at having said any thing, in the hurry and anger of the moment, to wound the feelings of his relation; "I spoke unkindly; but believe me, the rude words I uttered, if they have given you pain, have inflicted still more upon me. I am always saying what I do not mean, and when once I fall into a passion, my silly words flow with a rapidity like that of a mountain stream; but you know I spoke either in a rage or in jest; so, coz, dear my coz, be merry and forgiving."

"He jests at scars who never felt a wound," rejoined the earl, with an affectionate smile; "but you have, by your pertinacious loquacity, totally made me forget

forget whether I was proceeding through Poland to Moscow, or Sweden to St. Petersburgh."

"I wish I could," said Beauchief, with a look of great regard, and a warmth of manner which always rendered him beloved by his family, "make you completely forget that disagreeable, unreasonable, abominable, unjustifiable, detestable plan of going abroad; for when you are in Russia, what shall I do for a companion, and where shall I turn for a monitor or a friend?"

CHAPTER VII.

"Daphnis," says Clio, "has a charming eye;
What pity 'tis her shoulder is awry!
Aspasia's shape indeed—but then her air—
The man has parts who finds destruction there.
Almeria's wit has something that's divine;
And wit's enough—how few in all things shine!"

YOUNG.

"MANY of the gentlemen are just gone out shooting, my dear," said Mrs. Wellmont, one day, as Miss Rivers entered the room to pay a morning visit at Revesby Court. "How unfortunate! because," continued she, remarking an expression of unfeigned astonishment upon Julia's features, "lord Rosvellyn has been

been *so* anxious to have an opportunity of meeting you; and when he came from Valverde yesterday without being blessed with a sight of its fair inhabitants, he was so sad, solemn, and absent, I declare I did not know what to make of him; and my sweet lord Frederic Beauchief observed that he was under the dominion of Cupid, and said something about his being the "regent of love rhymes, lord of folded arms, and sovereign of sighs and groans." I wish I could remember all he said, it was so amusing that I laughed for a long time."

"Ay, thou didst laugh, *sans* intermission, an hour by this dial," said a gentleman, taking out his watch, and gazing on it, but not with lack-lustre eye.

"We were both absent," remarked Julia to Mrs. Wellmont, "on a two days visit at Aldeburgh Castle."

"Oh! at the Nugents'. I think William *is* a good-hearted man, though I still

still say he is not clever or agreeable. He is a great friend of lord Monmouth."

"He is amiable, I believe," rejoined Miss Rivers; "he is remarkably attentive to his sisters, and of a domestic turn of mind."

"Ah! *ceci me regarde*," said the gentleman we have before mentioned, shutting his snuff-box, and advancing into the middle of the room with the air of one determined to be heard, and accustomed to living in the society of those who regarded his opinion with respect and deference.—"Attentive to his sisters, say you, Miss Rivers? kind-hearted, you affirm, my dear Mrs. Wellmont—of a quiet disposition, and the friend of a noble peer? *On n'est indulgent que pour les personnes que l'on chérit, et il est bien difficile d'aimer des gens qui n'aiment rien eux-mêmes. Ah! qu'il me seroit aisé de m'égayer encore aux dépens du petit bon-vivant.*"

"Stay,

"Stay, stay, sir Algernon; though I learnt French when I was young, I have now quite forgotten it; so pray proceed in good old English."

Sir Algernon Egremont bowed haughtily, and looked with supercilious contempt on the old lady, who frankly avowed her ignorance as he went on.

"First then I think it no distinction to be the friend of a fool and the squire of a nobleman, who, though not like don Quixote, *pazzo por amore,* that is, mad for love, ma'am, is at least as much a knight-errant, and travels about to make himself conversant with the pedigrees, rent-rolls, vices, follies, and peculiarities of every poor devil whose insignificance does not shield him from impertinent interrogatories; he who is the confidant of a man of weak character, narrowed views, and sterile imagination, must be either a thorough-paced, complaisant flatterer, or, like his wretched associate, must be a person of enfeebled

 intellect

intellect and subordinate understanding. Secondly, you commend him for the gentleness of his manners, and the taste he manifests for home enjoyments and domestic occupations. Madam, I will prove to you," turning to the elder lady, for he perceived the younger did not much relish his dogmatic way of proceeding, "that the suavity and meekness of his behaviour and deportment origiginate in his indifference—his apathetical indifference towards every person and every circumstance which affect the comfort, or disturb the serenity of those whose minds are formed of more valuable materials. He is one, in short, madam, who is too cold to be wicked, and too negligent to be good, whose tranquillity arises from inattention to passing events, and whose inattention proceeds from a vacant and unoccupied heart."

"Well, he is no very great favourite of mine, sir Algernon," rejoined Mrs. Wellmont; "but still I must praise him

for

for his politeness to the Miss Nugents. I have seen him write notes for the eldest, and copy music for the other."

"Yes, because he is unqualified to understand the meaning of any book he peruses, is too slothful to find any gratification in field sports, and perceives the constant employment of weaving nets for that most indolent of recreations, fishing, irksome, wearisome, and productive rather of fatigue than amusement: even Mr. Nugent, madam, feels that '*a mind quite vacant is a mind distressed,*' and finds that the necessary attention he is obliged to bestow in writing invitations to dinner, in his cramped, formal, coxcomical, precise, little hand, prevents him from feeling the insupportable weight of the disease of a defective intellect, ennui."

Sir Algernon Egremont was descended from a noble family of large possessions in the county of Warwickshire, proud, yet gifted with understanding

 sufficient

sufficient to make that pride less ridiculous than it otherwise would have appeared—rich, and anxious to render his riches useful to others—wise, but by the constant efforts he made to shew his wisdom, disagreeable and dictatorial, and with manners undoubtedly dignified and imposing, yet nevertheless inelegant and unattractive. Gifted with a handsome figure, and a countenance like the one our fancy might portray Brutus, his appearance commanded respect, whilst his intellectual powers, and the unblemished integrity he manifested in his public life, challenged applause and admiration even from his political opponents. Stern, haughty, and severe to every body but an infirm and aged mother, that mother regarded him as if he had belonged to a higher class of beings than other mortals; and from his childhood accustomed to be surrounded by obsequious flatterers, though his penetration easily discovered their meanness,

ness, yet naturally of an unbending and unyielding spirit, he preferred their pliability and feigned devotion to the firm steady opposition of people, who, though he esteemed more highly, yet he disliked, because they differed from him in opinion. In short, sir Algernon Egremont's weaknesses were of the temper, not of the mind, and few possessed a warmer heart, stricter principles, or greater energy and elevation of soul.

"La, sir Algernon!" drawled Miss Langham, who had been listening with affected veneration and admiring interest to what he had been saying, and who, seeing Frederic did not pay her attention, was trying to insinuate herself into the good graces of the baronet, "I think Mr. Nugent is very sweet-tempered and kind-hearted. To be sure, I am too young to be able to judge of his abilities; but indeed few women are competent to decide upon that, I believe, young or old, uneducated or not."

 The

The pretty simpleton ended her silly speech with a gentle sigh and a look of absurd humility.

Egremont smiled contemptuously, for he saw through the fair Lydia's views, in making herself appear a model of insignificance, in a moment, and was not a little angry at her fancying, that to please a man of his sense, it was necessary to appear a more yielding fool than nature had made her.

"And do not you think Emily is delightful, so very accomplished, and so sweetly pretty?"

"She is, Miss Langham, a friend of yours, I perceive," rejoined sir Algernon, with a sneer and a low bow; "so consequently 'my tongue can't utter what my heart may feel."

"And then Maria is, I think, the most agreeable, interesting, and charming person in the world."

Here Egremont interrupted her insincere eulogium, by taking the "Morning

ing Herald" from the table on which it was lying, and reading out all the births, deaths, marriages, anecdotes of scandal, and descriptions of the various entertainments which filled its columns.

Lydia did not understand his meaning, and thought it was very rude to interrupt her sapient remarks by reading the contents of a newspaper aloud; but when he came to a flaming paragraph descriptive of the festivities at the mansion of a distinguished luminary in the circles of fashion, her astonishment was lost in rapture and admiration of the magnificence and splendour exhibited at this grand fete, and she exclaimed, in animated accents—"Oh! what a ball it must have been! so gay, so full, so crowded, so fashionable! and how beautiful the state-rooms must have appeared, all lighted up with festoons of lamps, flowers, evergreens, and all sorts of things! Pray go on," she added, as sir Algernon threw the newspaper negligently away.

 "Pardon

" Pardon me, Miss Langham, for engrossing your attention, and fixing it on a subject foreign to the one we had in discussion; but I merely read these few lines of bombastical nothingness, and the daily obituary, &c. &c. to shew you my opinion of Miss Nugent's powers of conversation—no, of Miss Nugent's mode of talking, which resembles the style of a silly newspaper exactly. When she pays my mother a visit, I never read the 'Morning Herald' to her that day, for I am well aware the fair Maria has anticipated the intelligence contained in that register of events, without interest in themselves, and happening to people perhaps as insignificant as the idle motes in the sunbeam."

Sir Algernon then turned carelessly away, and began reading " Pope's Essay on Criticism," apparently, with much satisfaction.

" Well now, I should have thought," said Lydia, in a whisper, quite audible however,

however, " that a man of sense and information would have liked Maria; but there, when people are so very clever, I suppose——"

"They see defects which are unheeded and unobserved by common understandings," hastily interrupted lady Langham, in an agony of fear, lest her darling should appear *rather too ridiculous.* "I know what you were going to remark, love; but I must frankly confess I think that Miss Nugent is remarkably plain; but you are always so prone to gloss over the dark shades, and bring forward only the brightest parts of a person's character, that lest you should mistake the mind of this young woman for one resembling the soft and gentle kindness of your own, I must inform you she is not only disagreeably ugly, but ill-natured, impertinent, and presuming."

She began this speech with a tender sentimental air, stroking her daughter's redundant locks of flaxen hair away

from

from her unmeaning eyes, but ended it with the tartness of look and asperity of manner which were most natural to her.

"Maria was certainly rather rude to me at the race-ball at Winchester, mamma; but then I dare say she did not mean it, and I am sure I very readily accepted the apology she made me the next morning," said Lydia, *playing the amiable.*

"*To err is human, to forgive divine,*" remarked Julia, smiling unaffectedly, and in a voice whose natural harmony was heard to much advantage, after the constrained tones of this manœuvring mother and daughter.

Sir Algernon Egremont looked up, laid aside his book, and joined the conversing party again.

"I tell you, my darling," resumed lady Langham, with an extension of the mouth, "this Miss Nugent behaved abominably to you, and that she is very satirical."

"Dearest

"Dearest mamma," cried the other, affectedly shrinking away from her ladyship's touch, "I grant you she makes all the *frais* of conversation herself, and that she likes to laugh at *tout le monde;* but then I am sure it is only the effect of her high spirits."

"It is an unpleasant mode of evincing her *gaicté de cœur* indubitably," said sir Algernon to Miss Rivers.

"It is a very common method of endeavouring to render one's discourse piquant, to throw a little satirical observation into the leaven of it," said a gentleman who had been silent heretofore," "and it is a lamentable truth that those who are ugly themselves like to detract from the beauty of others. Miss Nugent is very plain, you know; somewhat resembles an Ethiop, and her little, sharp, black eyes are always on the move, to spy out imperfections in another's beauty; but, faith! it wont do; a pretty woman is a very pretty thing, and will attract

admiration

admiration wherever she goes, in spite of the spiteful and spitefully-looking Maria. The other day I was saying how beautiful Miss Waldegrave was, and the odious creature croaked forth in her discordant notes—'Yes, she is rich, and has a good face, with a pair of fine eyes, that I grant you.'—'Dost grant me, hedgehog!' I was just going to say, but I manfully resisted my inclination to pop forth, like a loaded gun, a volley of truths, and bowed, smirked, sneered, and retired."

"I declare she is abused so, I have a good mind to take her part," muttered sir Algernon Egremont.

"La, Mr. Bentley! I am surprised at hearing *you* dislike her, because only yesterday you said you liked to be in her company, as she saved you the trouble of saying more than no and yes; and I must observe *I* think her very agreeable," drawled Lydia.

"There is no doubt then of her being

so,"

so," cried sir Algernon, bowing, and with an ironical smile.

"Sweetest love! you are infinitely too lenient to the faults of others," said lady Langham, "and I verily believe, think, judging from your own warm heart and feelings, that there would be no sins in the world, if there was no imprudence in it; but I confess that Miss Nugent's defects seem rather to proceed from the heart than the head."

"'Tis with our judgments as our watches, none
Go just alike, yet each believes his own,"

remarked sir Algernon, with a yawn as he left the room.

"Then, as to her being so ugly, I am sure Maria," resumed Lydia, "is not even *very* plain. She has a wide mouth certainly, but she has good teeth."

"That I deny," said Mr. Bentley, who had been looking listlessly out of the window for some time, and who had preferred

preferred a warm fire to a snowy walk, and to "shoot at folly as it flies," rather than at unoffending woodcocks; "her teeth are so wide, they resemble '*orient pearls at random strung*.'"

"Now Mr. Bentley," exclaimed Mrs. Wellmont, in a low voice to Julia, "seizes so favourable an opportunity with pleasure, of exhibiting his own even ranks of ivory placed with such enviable regularity; but if young men *are* coxcombs, they are seldom wicked; they have not time for gaming either, which is a good thing."

"But then," proceeded Miss Langham, "you must allow that Maria's eyes are, though small, uncommonly brilliant —that her hair is luxuriantly thick, and that her nose is by no means bad. *I* like a little *néz retroussé* far better than a thin aquiline."

"Every lady, my dear madam," returned the gentleman, fixing a footstool in its proper position, as if bending to hide

hide an ill-repressed sneer, and speaking to Mrs. Wellmont, " I think, really deems it indispensably requisite to avow a liking for the charms—nay, even the defects, which form or tarnish another's beauty, that is to say, persons who wish to be thought gentle and amiable," (this was said in a whisper, as he resumed his erect posture); " people, fashionable people especially, seldom pay visits of any duration to the palace of Truth; but I openly affirm, that the lady of whom we are speaking has an obliquity in both eyes; that they are small as those of an animal who generally dwells in a farmer's yard, and is ycleped a pig; and that if they sparkle, it is neither with the ray of intellectual good temper or genuine wit, but with the unhallowed fire of malice, ill nature, and spleen."

Here he stopped to take breath, and then went on—" I declare also that her hair is more red than auburn; that the shape of her visage is like the caricature of

of a monkey which this cocoa-nut exhibits" (here he displayed one which had been placed on a table for Mrs. Champignon's luncheon); "and though last, not least, that her nose is frightful:—*Venez ici, chere Ninon,*" continued he to a hideous little pug dog. "*Regardez, mes belles dames, cette petite chienne—c'est elle—c'est la pauvre Marie!*"

"Ha, ha, ha, ha!" cried lady Langham, and the "sweetest Lydia," bursting into a fit of inextinguishable laughter, which forced "*the graceful tear that streams at other's woes,*" to trickle down their dimpled cheeks, "there is the little *nez à la Roxolane* exactly."

"How extremely severe Mr. Bentley is!" whispered Mrs. Wellmont to Julia: "I am so afraid of him! When my back is turned, I always fancy that my imperfections will be cooked up to form a dish of scandal, and will furnish a delicious repast to feed the ill nature of my acquaintances."

"For

"For my own part," said Miss Rivers, in a low tone, as she walked a few paces away from the trio, "I think that open satire is far preferable to hypocritical sentimentality, and I own I should like to say to Miss Langham what sir Peter Teazle did to Mrs. Candour—'Madam, it is impossible to stop any body's tongues; but when I tell you the lady spoken of is my particular friend, I hope you will be so good as not to undertake her defence.' Now, though Miss Nugent is not intimate with me, yet I own I really felt pain in hearing her so unmercifully criticised and so deceitfully praised. A woman never ought to speak slightingly of another; for, by doing so, she unavoidably lowers herself in the esteem of the worthy of her own sex, and exposes herself to the remarks of the other, as I have frequently observed that gentlemen, on hearing one lady find fault with an acquaintance, imagine it proceeds from a dread of rivalry, or a paltry

paltry envy of accomplishments and charms they do not possess."

She looked round, and perceived Mr. Bentley at her elbow; she blushed, and remained silent.

"Introduce me to that charming girl, Mrs. Wellmont, I entreat you," observed he, eagerly approaching that lady (who was attempting to calm the rage of her sister-in-law, who at that moment entered, complaining that a servant had washed the floor of her bedchamber); "she must be worth knowing, for beauty appears not to have rendered her conceited, and she evidently does not enjoy detraction."

"Very well; to-morrow I will," answered the good lady; "but you see she is just rising to quit the room, and I declare I am almost wild, Mrs. Champignon is speaking in such a stentorian voice."

No sooner had Julia departed, than several

several ladies began to criticise her personal charms, and the timid, though graceful manners which had at first attracted the attention of Mr. Bentley, who, though generally addicted to satire, took no part in the conversation of those who, neither gifted with the loveliness, the worth, or the sense of Miss Rivers, endeavoured to find out that she was neither pleasing, regularly beautiful, or agreeable.

"I like to discover the sins, the vices, the foibles, and all the blemishes of the human character, and perhaps am too apt to derive entertainment from observing the frailties of the vain votaries of fashion," said he to Mrs. Wellmont; "but believe me, my dear madam, I love far better to bring merit from obscurity, and to shew virtue, grace, humility, and unaffected loveliness, in all their native purity and lustre. If to penetrate into the secret recesses of the human heart is a favourite occupation of

of mine, trust me, that though the follies I find there furnish me with amusement, yet, at the same time, to behold real sterling goodness, affords me much higher enjoyment. There is something also so peculiarly attractive and engaging in the retiring modesty and sweet reserve of that young lady's manners, who has just quitted the room, that I am powerfully interested in her favour; indeed, any person who seeks to find a fault in them, must assuredly have an envious or wicked mind, which hates to see even the semblance of virtue or innocence worn by another."

Mr. Bentley was commonly thought very severe, but very pleasant—very ill-tempered, but very good-hearted—very fond of society, yet still fonder of abusing it; in short, he was shunned by some, and courted by others, for often the same causes produce diametrically opposite effects; for though poor Mr. Bentley was almost universally disliked,

and

and as much by those who flattered, as those who endeavoured to avoid him, by one class of people *he appeared* to be beloved as sincerely as in reality he was *hated.*

CHAPTER VIII.



——————— *Vive la bagatelle!*
The man that laughs and loves, must sure do well.
POPE.

WHEN Miss Rivers returned to Valverde, to her utter astonishment she beheld lord Frederic Beauchief walking hastily backwards and forwards in Georgiana's morning-room, singing an Italian air one moment, and in another engaged in talking nonsense to a parrot, which happened to be there. On hearing her approach he turned round with a quick gesture of pleasure; but when he perceived who it was, a blush of disappointment crossed his open brow for a moment; and after having exchanged the customary

ary forms of civility on meeting, he exclaimed, half pettishly—" The abominable old butler told me your lovely friend, Miss Waldegrave, would be at home in ten minutes, if I could wait here for her; but I have walked more times than I can count up and down this boudoir, gazed millions of moments on yonder sun-excluding blind, have taken out my watch repeatedly, and, in short, have been performing penance in this cold apartment for the space of two hours and a half."

" I wonder your patience is not completely exhausted, my lord," replied Julia, smiling at the exaggerated account he gave of his proceedings.

" And so it is, I can assure you; I had always an uncommonly-small stock of that most laudable, but hardly-attained Christian virtue, and a very large portion of its opposite quality; then to be patient, implies that we must have gone through some affliction or other, and, *Dieu merci!*

 I have

I have passed my existence in as comfortable a manner as most people."

"It would really be an irreparable loss to society, lord Frederic," said Julia gaily, "if you were to bid adieu to 'heart-easing mirth!' so I shall not cease to pray for the preservation of your happiness; you are not one of those people who can be joyful without communicating the satisfaction you feel yourself to all your acquaintances."

"Faith!" replied he, "I am not a person who, if I was sad, would seek to bury my grief in my bosom: I am never melancholy, without trying to make others so too; therefore there is some sense in your wishing me to be happy: why, I never have a pain in my head, but I complain so bitterly, that every body feels sorry for me, or for themselves; and when I have a fit of the rheumatism, I roar with the agony—ay, Miss Rivers, 'I roar you, as 'twere any nightingale!' yea, verily, I do 'aggravate my voice

so

so as 'twere any sucking dove!'—Oh! that divine fellow, Shakespeare! immortal sheep-stealer! how much do I owe thee, for when my own bad coinage of wit is running low, I can always have recourse to thy mint of inexhaustible treasure, and take thy bright gold and sterling silver to adorn my discourse with witty repartee, ingenious drolleries, solid sense, or beautiful sentiments."

"You seem seldom at a loss, my lord, for the two first-named requisites, to make a person's conversation agreeable."

"Thank you, my dear Miss Rivers, thank you for your compliment," said lord Frederic; "though I own I think the speech might be amended on a second reading; so, therefore, I will move for an alteration of the same. Oh! *à-propos des bottes*, will you have the goodness to give these verses to Miss Waldegrave, with my compliments, and say that I found them yesterday in the 'Aphorisms of sir Philip Sidney?"

As he spoke, he held them out to Julia; but before she could take them, he rapidly drew his hand back again, and proceeded—"Will you give me a pen and ink?—yet stay—no, don't say any thing at all about it."

"About what, lord Frederic?" cried Miss Rivers, staring.

"About these verses."

"I am totally ignorant of what verses you are speaking."

"Indeed! I am delighted to hear that remark; for, as brave Harry Percy said to his wife, I am well aware 'thou wilt not speak of what thou dost not know.'"

"Will you give me a frank, lord Frederic, before you depart?" cried Julia, seeing him rise from the *chaise longue* on which he was sitting, or rather lolling, with much negligence, "for I was really so much surprised at finding sir Algernon Egremont so outrageously solemn, and dictatorially ridiculous, that I completely forgot to ask him for one."

"With

"With the greatest pleasure," rejoined lord Frederic, taking a chair, drawing it towards a sofa-table, dipping his pen in the ink, and writing with infinite rapidity.

"To Miss Delwyn, my lord," said Julia, as his lordship looked up to her inquiringly.

"Very well; there, 'tis done—can I put the letter in the post for you? I am going to ——. Oh! you were mentioning sir Algernon; I never see him but I lament that such 'a noble mind *is quite* o'erthrown' by an absurd pride, and all his really-valuable qualities shrouded in a thick veil of conceit; besides, he has such a gunpowder temper, I dislike coming near him, for fear I should let slip some little satirical squib, and then what an explosion would be the consequence! the sky hailing brimstone and raining fire would be nothing to him! Well, I thank Heaven I am neither proud, which makes a man ri-

 diculous,

diculous, or quarrelsome, which renders a person detested, but am blessed with good health, good temper, and a merry heart."

"Poor sir Algernon!" replied Julia, "I really wish he possessed the two latter gifts; he has the most magisterial cast of features, and the most doleful expression of countenance—

'Seldom he smiles,
And smiles in such a sort, as he did disdain himself,
That he could be moved to smile at any thing.'"

"Ay!" said lord Frederic, with much animation, for he began to be pleased with his fair companion, "he is one of those people who think, that to laugh is to be silly, and that to be good-tempered is a proof of a weak intellect; moreover, poor man, the principal means he makes use of to acquire respect, is by *insisting on it; and it sometimes answers his purpose, as it does an highwayman's in regard to money.*"

"His

"His heart," exclaimed Miss Rivers, "indeed appears to me to be as inaccessible as the highest mountain in the world."

"And," interrupted Beauchief with a laugh, "when one is arrived at the summit of the hill, perhaps the air is so bleak, it kills one; and when one has become convinced, thoroughly convinced, of the coldness of sir Algernon's heart, we feel we have gained nothing by attempting to find an access to it."

"Now you are too severe; I believe," said Miss Rivers, "that although he is long in forming a friendship for any body, yet, when he has bestowed his regard on an individual, few men shew greater warmth of affection, or manifest a more sincere desire to be of essential use, benefit, or advantage to him, than sir Algernon Egremont."

"Well, I must confess I don't like him," answered lord Frederic; "there are some people who are very disgusting,

 though

though they are vastly amiable, and all that."

"I do not think this gentleman is by any means disgusting; on the contrary, his talents are of the highest order, and his conversation——"

"I beg your pardon, but I must go; it is near four o'clock; and at this season of the year, 'when earth, clad in russet, scorns the lively green,' it is unwholesome to inhale the air after that hour, as my mother says; so adieu—*milles amitiés à votre belle amie intime*;" and cordially shaking the hand of Miss Rivers, the vivacious lord Frederic departed, to wander, like the restless enemy of mankind, up and down in search of employment.

CHAP-

CHAPTER IX.

I care not, Fortune, what you me deny;
You cannot rob me of free nature's grace;
You cannot shut the windows of the sky,
Through which Aurora shews her brightening face;
You cannot bar my constant feet to trace
The woods and lawns by living stream at eve;
Let health my nerves and finer fibres brace,
And I their toys to the *great children* leave—
Of fancy, reason, virtue, nought can me bereave.

THOMSON.

THERE is something peculiarly beautiful in the appearance of nature after a storm, when the elements have exhausted their fury, and rain has descended in torrents upon the earth, to revivify its verdure, and bring its fruits to perfection, from

the contrast the preceding obscurity and darkness affords, to the present cheering liveliness of all around; every thing seems more grateful to our pleased senses than before; the sun appears to shine more brightly, the breeze to blow with greater freshness, the sky to be tinged with a deeper shade of blue, and every flower to bloom with greater luxuriance, and smell with sweeter perfume.

It is thus in life, after our souls have tasted the bitterness of affliction, and every thought has been turned towards the gloom which hangs over the "valley of the shadow of death," that the beams of reviving hope and joy seem far more precious to us, than the fair, unbroken, unclouded happiness we revelled in, previous to the dark days of trouble and distress. We then vainly imagined, when life was new, and our hearts had never experienced the insufficiency of worldly enjoyment, and the anguish of worldly disappointment, that pleasure was

was the lot of the largest portion of mankind, and that our sorrows were "as dust weighed in the balance," when compared with our prosperities.

But when calamities come, and sooner or later every man is visited by misfortune, we are inexpressibly thankful to God for the slightest blessing which softens our misery, or renovates our hopes, we feel that we "were made to mourn," and we sigh, as we reflect that a moment might destroy the fairy fabric of bliss we have again constructed; but we also rejoice "that this is not our abiding-place," and that if we bear our load of sorrow patiently, we shall "lay up for ourselves treasure in heaven," which can never be taken from us.

It is then we look up to our Creator, and offer him our prayers, and the "sacrifice of a contrite and a broken heart will he not despise;" we pour out our whole soul to our Maker, and he sends a ray of heavenly consolation, of celestial

celestial hope, which animates, which enlightens, which comforts, and which cheers us.

The unreproved pleasures also which the world offers to our acceptance, if they do not dissipate the clouds of grief which still hang over our destiny, are received with rapturous gratitude; and though perhaps the remembrance of our past felicity frequently intrudes itself upon our privacy, yet we regard the days gone by with a softened regret, and more hallowed melancholy.

After having drained the cup of woe to its dregs, we anxiously look out for those "still waters, and those green pastures," our Saviour has promised should be the portion and reward of the faithful, the patient, and the true; and we firmly lay hold of every little comfort which, in the bright days of uninterrupted bliss, we allowed to pass by totally disregarded, or sinfully despised; every amelioration of the hardness of our

our lot we receive with unbounded thankfulness, and it is then that the pious sufferer can cry out with holy enthusiasm, "Lord, it is good for me that I have been afflicted."

Many, indeed, to whom adversities come as an armed battalion, have reason to "kiss the chastening rod" of that All-wise and All-powerful Being, who would rather bless than punish his erring children; sorrow, particularly that species of it caused by the death of those fondly-loved and deeply-lamented friends, who have finished their earthly pilgrimage before us, renders the human mind more prone to despise the enjoyments of this world, and far more eager in contemplating those we shall experience in that blissful region where there shall be no more woe, neither separation or pain, and where God will wipe all tears away from the eyes of the righteous and unhappy*; it also makes the heart more tender, compassionate, and kind, and bestows

bestows that heaven-directed sympathy on our souls, which prompts us to weep with those who weep, as well as rejoice with those who rejoice.

Georgiana felt the truth of these observations; her youthful heart, purified in a great measure from the original sins which tarnished its lustre, had been deeply wounded by filial regret and anguish, but had also proved the beneficial effects of adversity.

Thrown into the same society of which she had formed a distinguished member previous to her father's dissolution, she maintained the firm integrity and uprightness of her principles; and though again the object of adulation, flattery, and real admiration, she was now indifferent to the one, at least imperceptibly affected by it, whilst she heartily despised the other, which she at present quickly discovered, for she was no longer infatuated with conceit and vain presumption.

The vivacity of her conversation still remained;

remained; the charming animation of her countenance still delighted her chosen friends; but her wit did not exercise itself upon persons, and her eye was never lighted up with the fire of malicious feeling.

"So there is to be a grand dinner-party given to-morrow at Revesby Court," said Miss Waldegrave one morning, as she was sitting at breakfast with Julia Rivers; then handing the letter to her friend, she continued—"Mrs. Wellmont is the kindest old lady in the world, I really believe; pray read that billet aloud—I am sure you will be quite pleased with the native good-humour, *bonhommie*, and affectionate interest, with which she enters into the feelings of us young people, and facilitates the accomplishment of all our unreasonable wishes."

Miss Rivers, after taking off the seal (which was a huge specimen of what is termed canting heraldry, a well and hill,

or mount) to send to a lady who was making a collection of coats-of-arms, read, in compliance with Georgiana's desire, the following letter:—

"*Revesby Court, Monday.*

"MY DEAREST GEORGY,

"I hope this severe weather has not brought to the inhabitants of Valverde that most troublesome visitor, the influenza; or, at all events, that it has made its bow in the kitchen, and not been so presuming as to mount up stairs, and force an entrance into the drawing-room. For my own part, I have a bad bill of health to send, as I have been dreadfully tormented with shivering fits, a shaking cough, and an uncommonly-disagreeable hoarseness; but I own that I merited my illness by my youthful imprudences, and juvenile indiscretions. Sir Algernon Egremont says, in his solemn tone and grave manner, 'the lady

lady who prefers a drive in an open vehicle, and clad in the habiliments proper only for a person in a gondola, in the warmest evening of an Italian summer, most indubitably merits paying the penalty of her inconsideration, by being confined to her apartment for a few days, condemned to solitude, nurtured with treacle posset, and wounded by the point of a lancet.' To all this I reply, I wish there was a tax upon those who like to give a sick person pain, by telling her that she was the unwitting author of her own malady. To own the truth then, I absolutely allowed myself to be wheedled into accompanying lord Frederic Beauchief in his tilbury to Aldeburgh Castle, dined there, and returned in a heavy fall of snow. I remember, when I was a child, a favourite amusement of mine was to observe the flakes of snow fall upon the earth in the winter, and I used to say, 'my grandmother was picking her geese!' now, thought

thought I to myself, when I got out of the vehicle, as it stopped at the entrance-hall of my mansion, if any child could see from the attics my round, plump person drop from this tilbury, they would say I was a very large goose! for I was quite as cold as a snow-ball, and my gown was turned completely white, by the constant dropping of frozen particles on it. But now I am well, have discarded prudence with my headache, and tractability with my physic, in despite of the winks, nods, and jeremiades, (as lord Frederic says, who keeps bothering me to give messages, and makes me write what he chooses) of my faithful attendant, Miller—have ventured out on the balcony, and taken another drive with his madcap lordship. I have also drank wine, and eaten meat, and shut my eyes to the deplorably-long lean visage, and my ears to the odious prophecies, of my sorrowful abigail, who was, my dear Georgy, and my no less dear

dear Julia, more solemn than a physician, more medicinal than an apothecary, and more talkative than a regular nurse.

"But now a truce to complaints, and 'my pen, thou mighty instrument of little men, slave of my thoughts, obedient to my will,' describe how anxious I am for the society of my sweet young friends at Valverde, who must not think me crazy for writing such an epistle; but blame lord Frederic, not me. Now, my loves, do pray come to-morrow to dine here, for I have collected a tribe of belles, and a host of beaux, on purpose to meet you.

"Do not object to the weather; the snow has disappeared, and the sun begins to peep complacently forth from the misty vapours which have long hidden it from sight, and

'Twinkles weak, as
A drunken man's dim eye in maudlin sorrow.'

"I sup-

"I suppose this nonsense is poetry, which, as you know I hate, I am sure you will not think I was such a fool as to write; and besides, I really think it must be the end of some drinking song, only drinking is not fashionable; so probably it is only lord Frederic Beauchief's nonsense. I have prepared beds, and the room you occupied, Georgiana, when visiting here in the Wentworths' time, is ready for your immediate reception: come then, I entreat, I implore, I command you, and stay for a week at least. Thank Heaven, now his chattering lordship is gone, and I can write as I like. Do you know that lord Rosvellyn blushes whenever a certain young lady is mentioned, and sighed so the other day, when sir Algernon said she was captivating, that I do think he is jealous; but I cannot make all of it out—can you, Georgy?"

"I am thinking of giving a ball to enliven some of the young people; this snow, poor things! must have been bad

for

for them; so when you come here, my dears, I intend consulting you about it.

"I must conclude now, for here is the earl of Rosvellyn every moment interrupting me, with saying something, stuttering, blushing, and looking so like a lover! I suppose somebody told him I was writing to Valverde, for he keeps charging me to give some rigmarol message or other to Miss Rivers. Do you know that his agreeable cousin calls him 'the poor knight of the bleeding heart, and grievously solemn aspect!' but though he is so grave and silent, I wish I could recollect what he told me to inform Julia of; but I am sure that both my dear young friends will excuse me, well knowing that my memory is as treacherous as my heart is sincere, when I sign myself

"Your affectionately-attached

"CORDELIA WELLMONT."

CHAP-

CHAPTER X.

I hold the world but as the world, Gratiano;
A stage, where every man must play his part.
Merchant of Venice.

"WHY tarry the wheels of their chariot?" said lord Frederic Beauchief, impatiently pacing backwards and forwards Mrs. Wellmont's drawing-room: "surely, my dear madam," added he, turning to that lady, "you did not mistake the day, or forget to mention the hour of dinner?"

"I am extremely sorry to say I did not remember to put in the last charge, my lord," replied she, looking confused and uncomfortable; "but I dare say they will know that my hour of dining is half-past six."

"That

"That is an absolute impossibility," cried he peevishly, taking out his watch; "for the last time they were at Revesby Court, you had the repast served up at seven; and before that, frequently at five."

"Dear me, if you are so very hungry, and so anxious for your dinner," said the good Mrs. Wellmont, "I will ring for it to be ready in a few minutes."

"By no means, ma'am," returned he bowing, and endeavouring to smile; "I am only afraid that Miss Waldegrave and Miss Rivers will not be here to partake of it."

"Ah! but I am so grieved you did not take any refreshment in the middle of the day," cried the old lady, shaking her head; "young people are always so imprudent, and never think of any contingencies; but I hope to-morrow that I shall prevail on you to put a few biscuits in your shooting pouch, along with the powder and shot."

"The shot is always confined in a

narrow belt slung over the shoulder, ma'am."

"Well, my dear lord?"

"And so it would be impossible to put even a wafer along with it; besides, gunpowder biscuits, and brimstone bread, would be rather disgusting and nauseous to the palate."

"I never heard of any body taking gunpowder willingly in my life," said Mr. Bentley, "unless to cure an inward bruise."

"And I hope my good friend, lord Frederic Beauchief, is heart-whole," exclaimed sir William Langham, as he shuffled out of the room.

"Psha!" muttered the young nobleman, turning away his head.

"It is really a pity that so clever a young man should be silly enough to allow himself to be put out of temper by the impertinent hints of such a dolt as the indolent bustler, sir William," said Mr. Bentley, addressing Mrs. Wellmont, who

who was watching lord Frederic as he seated himself on a sofa, and threw one of the cushions against a pug-dog which was reclining on one side of it.

"La! he is not angry—it is only his queer way," replied she.

"Only his way to teaze dogs! I wish he would let mine alone, and choose some other method of amusing himself."

"He does not like to torment any body, or any thing," exclaimed Mrs. Wellmont, half offended; "but I suppose he did not like Ninon to lie just by him, growling and barking in her dreams even; indeed I wonder you can make the ugly creature such a favourite—she is the most ill-tempered, snarling, little cur in Christendom."

"I wonder how our hostess can endure the conversation of that Mrs. Champignon," whispered Mr. Bentley to lord Rosvellyn, who was standing near him; "but I suppose she does it from the same reason that I pay attention

to *ma pauvre* Ninon, because, that in spite of all her faults, she still cherishes a latent spark of affection for her."

Lord Frederic, in the meantime, instead of being cross, was deriving much entertainment from observing the different methods of people entering the apartment.

Lady Langham advanced with her pretty piece of languid affectation, Miss Lydia, hanging on her arm, with the air of a person who was endeavouring to spy out whether the charms of her daughter attracted admiration.

Sir William re-entered, walking with rapidity, talking very fast to every person he recognized in proceeding up the room, occasionally stopping to collect an anecdote, and slide out a cunning observation, such as—" Ah! Mr. Bentley, I discovered who is the author of that satirical novel you were speaking to me of, the last time we met. Sly dog! droll fellow! your men of wit always like to be wondered

dered at, but it wont do with people who have passed their grand climacteric. Egad! age quickens a person's intellect, as well as it heightens the flavour of port wine." Then to a young lady he familiarly winked *en passant*, and muttered—"So you don't like the name of Hodges, but prefer that of Melford?"

"It sounds better, at least," the smirking girl flippantly replied, as the old gentleman walked on.

Sir Algernon Egremont appeared, just cast a penetrating glance around the apartment, elevated his eyebrows as he beheld the motley group assembled in it, walked to a window, drew out his watch, gazed on the minute-hand, saw it had stopped, and coolly rang the bell to inquire what o'clock it was.

Mrs. Champignon, a lady *d'un certain age*, of starched, stiff, upright, decorous, forbidding, puritanical appearance, was nearly ten minutes walking in search of a commodious seat, which, when found,

 she

she placed her meagre form precisely in, bridled, threw her shoulders primly back, put her hands in a formal position, and *looked around, to hate, and to be hated.*

Mr. St. Julians entered with mincing step and languid gait, apparently so fatigued with the laborious duties of the toilet, that it required an unusual degree of mental energy for him to reach an ottoman, on which he fell in an attitude more studied than graceful; and then, with half-shut eye and open mouth, cast unutterable looks of affection, first on one foot, and then on the other, as he placed them in different positions.

Mrs. Bentley came forwards with a lively, volatile air, as if to shew that she aped the manners of a Frenchwoman; and gazed, as she passed a large mirror, with such apparent satisfaction on her own simpering face and fairy figure, that Frederic concluded, with much truth, that she imagined her imitation

at

at least equalled the originality of her model.

"Vain creature!" whispered he, turning to his cousin, "does she suppose that levity is always the characteristic of a Parisian belle, and that her second-hand airs and graces can please a sensible foreigner, or attract an Englishman? She neither possesses the elegant ease, the unconstrained freedom, the native sprightliness, which render a Frenchwoman so irresistibly captivating, or the bewitching reserve, the dignity, the modest *maintien*, which distinguish a British lady—at least which once, in the olden time, used to distinguish them from all other nations; in attempting a bad copy of the one, she has lost the charms of the other, and has substituted, in their place, all the glaring defects of the former."

"Ah! why so vain, though blooming in thy spring,
Thou shining, frail, ador'd, and wretched thing!
Old age will come, disease may come before;
Fifteen is full as mortal as threescore!"

 sighed

sighed Rosvellyn, with a contemplative air.

"There goes the philosopher of thirty! moralizing, with all the gravity of his great grandfather, on the follies of the human race.—'Nothing new under the sun,' said the wise man—and nothing new in thy discourse," cries Frederic Beauchief.

"I really think some English ladies," observed Rosvellyn, with a shrewd smile, "fancy that they cannot adorn themselves *à la mode de Paris* without rouge and low fronts; whereas, in reality, though 'haughty Gallia's dames' are fond of sporting a little borrowed bloom in the evening, yet they seldom approve of displaying their persons like Iphigenia's pre——"

"Very true what you were going to observe, Howard; Lord, look how ill Mrs. Bentley is dressed! she is absolutely a 'queen of shreds and patches, tawdry finery, tasteless ornaments, feathers, flowers,

flowers, and diamonds!' so laçy, and so fur-belowed—did you ever see such a preposterous figure?"

"As she passed me," cried Rosvellyn, determined to be gay, "I declare I thought a bottle of eau de Cologne had burst in her hand.—

'Her odoriferous attempts to please,
Perhaps might prosper with a swarm of bees.'

But I hate perfumes of all sorts."

"Hush," said Frederic, placing his finger on his lip.

"Did you hear the wheels of a carriage then?" asked Rosvellyn, his heart throbbing with emotion at the idea of again beholding Julia, whose charms of mind and person he in vain endeavoured to banish from his memory.

"It is only lord Monmouth," said Mrs. Wellmont, "who is come to spend a few days at Revesby Court, previous to going into Wales."

 "Oh,

"Oh, Lord! how I wish his lordship was drinking goats whey on one of the mountains!" murmured Frederic in dismay.

"What a charming young man he is!" resumed the lady, after a short pause; "I think he is the sweetest-tempered person in existence."

Here she stopped, and fixed her eyes, with an appealing look, upon Beauchief, who carelessly replied—"Yes, remarkable for the unvarying suavity and mildness of his deportment in general society; but how can he be otherwise, when he is too much courted ever to be contradicted, and much too negligent to answer if he was? He is one who has few ideas; and those few are so confused, that though he can ask questions with the rapidity of a *race*horse, yet he is slow and heavy in replying to them as a heavy, overworked *cart*horse!"

"Then how handsome! even you must allow that."

"He

"He looks a *Roman*, and he moves a *king!*" said Howard with a smile.

"He is certainly not deformed," rejoined his cousin impatiently; "and he is not marked with the smallpox."

"Then so clever!" said the friend of nobility.

"True, in finding the easiest way to make himself comfortable, and in hindering others by his pertinacious curiosity from being so."

"So agreeable!"

"Humph! but yes, he is agreeable to spinsters, who sigh for an establishment, and matrons who long to see an earl's coronet laid at the feet of a portionless daughter."

"So fashionable, so easy, so elegant, in his manners!"

"Even I," retorted lord Frederic, speaking with excessive rapidity, "cannot deny Monmouth the praise due to *nonchalant* fashionable impertinence: to give you a specimen of his *dégagé* airs

and *easy* graces—one evening at a crowded assembly at the Argyle Rooms, 'The Refuge for the Destitute,' you know, as it is called, I observed his lordship lolling on the only unoccupied seat in the room."

"What a capital blunder! what a complete Irishism!" said lord Rosvellyn; "why, Frederic, your father was indisputably wrong in his assertion that you had visited Killarney, and made the tour of Ireland, without meeting any one who said one thing and meant another—ha! ha! I see you have spent your time not only in listening to Irish bulls, but in trying to make them yourself."

"Well, you need not laugh so—it is quite provoking. Monmouth, my dear Mrs. Wellmont," continued Frederic, with increased asperity, for nothing whets our ill nature in judging of others so much as being ridiculed one's self, "took possession of this unoccupied seat, and never moved, though a lady, a young, and very lovely one too, was standing by

by him, nearly fainting with fatigue; I longed to drag him from the chair."

"Had the lady been either ugly or shrivelled, I doubt your charity towards her would have been rather cold."

"Will you be quiet, Howard?" said his cousin; "like my lady's eldest son, evermore talking; but this exquisite piece of exquisite folly—this apathetical Monmouth, instead of offering this fair stranger the seat on which he was lolling, remained for above an hour fixing his eyes on her blushing cheek, until at the expiration of that time I caught a glimpse of the corner of a form, and flew across the room to hand her to it."

"I wish," cried lord Rosvellyn yawning, "you would give me the chair you are twirling about in your hands now, for I, like the '*bella incognita*,' am dying with fatigue."

Frederic did as he was desired, and was proceeding, when Mrs. Wellmont interrupted him by exclaiming—"Indeed

deed I think you see only his imperfections, and none of his good qualities."

"Can you enumerate any?" asked he, his lip just curling with a half-formed sneer.

"*I* think him very obliging."

"Yes, my dear madam, to his steward, when he aims at cheating him; to gamesters, who wish to strip him of a little of his superfluous wealth; and to horse-jockeys trying to inveigle him into purchasing their broken-down race-horses."

"Pray desist, my lord," cried Mrs. Wellmont, colouring with anger; "I think his lordship all perfection."

"I am heartily sorry, unutterably shocked," returned Frederic, with a look of complete prostration of soul, "at committing such a breach in good manners as to find fault with any *valued* or intimate friend of yours, my dear madam; but indeed I must plead, in my extenuation, that I imagined we were speaking

only

only of a slight, casual, and good-for-nothing sort of common acquaintance."

"Do you know," said he, turning to lord Rosvellyn, as the lady retreated, "that Mrs. Wellmont fancies *le curieux* all perfection? and so he is, the perfection of a coxcomb."

"Frederic, Frederic!" ejaculated his cousin, "instead of having a lion and an eagle for your armorial bearings, you ought to have a magpie for your crest, and two cameleons for your supporters; it was but a few weeks back, when lord Monmouth was named your double; and a lady told me only two months ago, that she could not think of inviting one of the two inseparables to her house without the other. You surely have not forgotten, that last spring you were denominated the substance, and the ill-fated prater the shadow; for you never entered a ball-room but his tall figure was seen gliding after you, as if the earl was conscious of his being a mere nothing

thing—a cipher in creation—and therefore took you with him to shew his signification, and to double his value."

"Very well, very fair; but pray cease your intolerably-rude remarks," rejoined Frederic, laughing with heartfelt glee at his own propensity to change—"is the sky always blue, the earth always green, the air always mild, the wind always blowing the same way, or——"

"Oh, spare me your metaphors, I implore, I beseech you!" cried Rosvellyn, with an expressive shrug, and elevating his eyebrows. "Believe me I am well aware of the impossibility of a weathercock's standing continually in the same position."

"At least," returned the other with a bright smile, "you must allow, that however my fancies vary, and range about, as the shadows of evening over the surface of the ground, that my heart still remains as firmly attached to its real friends

friends as ever, and that my feelings, though their impetuosity may sometimes lead me to commit faults and imprudences, 'more in number than the hairs of my head,' never prompted me to do an ungenerous, an unkind, or a wicked action."

"Beauchief," said Mr. Bentley, advancing towards the *chaise longue*, where that strange young nobleman was carelessly and indolently reclined in one corner, with his feet stretched out on an ottoman, "who is that uncommonly-pretty girl sitting next lady Langham?"

"I cannot see at so great a distance," replied he, affectedly winking, and shutting a pair of singularly-brilliant eyes.

"But you are such an enthusiastic admirer of beauty, my lord, that the trouble of walking a few paces would be amply repaid by having a nearer view of this remarkably-handsome girl."

"I an adorer of beauty!" returned he,

throwing

throwing himself into a theatrical attitude; "of that

'Vain, that fleeting good,
A shining gloss, that fadeth suddenly;
A flower that dies when almost in the bud,
A brittle glass that breaketh presently;
A fleeting good, a gloss, a glass, a flower,
Lost, faded, broken, dead, within an hour."

"Frederic," interrupted lord Rosvellyn calmly, addressing himself to Mr. Bentley, "is always acting some new character on that eventful stage, the world, and his present one is the Whimsical Genius, or the Capricious Lover!"

"Lover indeed!" ejaculated he; "and what pray is your lordship?" he longed to add, as he saw both the cousins fly with the rapidity of lightning towards Miss Waldegrave and her friend, and engage them in earnest conversation, until dinner was announced, when the company simultaneously arose, and walked towards the eating-room, where a splendid

splendid repast smoked upon the hospitable board, whose appearance for a time completely rivetted the attention of the volatile Frederic, who forgot instantaneously his love, his whimsicalities, his *besoin de briller*, and his fondness for talking.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XI.

Quit, quit, for shame! this will not move,
This cannot take her;
If of herself she will not love,
Nothing can make her. *

SIR JOHN SUCKLING.

MRS. Wellmont and Georgiana were deeply engaged in an interesting conversation, in an apartment which in the late lady Wentworth's lifetime had been exclusively appropriated as a ball-room, when lord Frederic Beauchief entered; and after having looked about with a contemplative air and serious demeanour, murmured in a half-aside sort of manner, and as if thinking aloud, as he turned from the orchestra, which was elevated a con-

a considerable distance from the floor—"This dim light would do vastly well for the moon—this gallery for a balcony—this spacious chamber for a garden—I know Romeo's part perfectly, and she told me at Audleyhurst she could act Juliet." Then approaching Georgiana, who was standing at a little distance, smiling at his oddity, but by no means astonished at it, as she was now perfectly aware of the versatility of his mind—"Dearest Miss Waldegrave! will you grant the humble petition, the earnest prayer, the lowly supplication, which I have summoned courage enough to ask of you?"

"Not before hearing what it is, my lord," she replied.

"It is only to allow me to conduct you towards the steps leading to this orchestra;" as he spoke, he offered her his arm; "then when arrived there, if you would deign to listen to me, whilst

I recite

I recite the celebrated speech in that bewitching play, Romeo and Juliet, you would infinitely oblige me."

"With the greatest pleasure," said Georgiana laughingly. "Will you give me Shakespeare? for I suppose you are learning your part, previous to acting before a select and fashionable audience at the private theatre sir William Langham has lately fitted up at Belmont."

"Oh! and this is a rehearsal—la! how delightful!" said Mrs. Bentley, pushing forwards, and wishing to be the fair Juliet.

"I did not know that lady Langham had been so imprudent," remarked sir Algernon Egremont, "as to think of allowing her daughters to act."

"La! sir Algernon, don't you like young ladies to perform characters just to please their friends and acquaintances?" drawled Mrs. Bentley, feeling her wish for reciting disappear.

"I think,

" I think, madam," he rejoined, " that if the Miss Langhams could learn their parts, there would be no objection to their acting."

" I never saw them in my life," said Frederic, " but they were assuming some new character."

" They are indeed accomplished actresses," observed Mr. Bentley.

" And their mother is an excellent prompter!" observed lord Rosvellyn.

" I am sure the eldest is an inimitable Lydia Languish!" cried Frederic negligently.

" I grant you she has all the puerile affectation, but none of the romantic sentiment," said sir Algernon.

" There you are wrong; she is all bewitching sweetness and gentle sympathy," remarked Mr. Bentley; " every word is accompanied with a sigh, and all her speeches are as tender and as cloying as those extracted from a French novel."

" Indeed!" exclaimed Beauchief; " I always

always expect to find her 'dissolved in her own maudlin tears."

"Well, then she *shall* act, pretty dear!" cried the other, "or I fear we shall have pouts and sullenness; I thought to-day at dinner she wished to throw the wine in your face, Beauchief, because you asked her to drink some with you, and then forgot to bow."

"That would do vastly well for the miniature scene, ha, ha! with what an air of graceful sincerity she would say, 'that she erased your image from her heart as easily as she flung your counterfeit away!"

"True; for I am a second son; and *you*, sir Algernon, have come into possession of your title, and an unimpaired estate."

"Then she would not be disinterested enough for Miss Languish."

"Well, a truce to the graces!"

"Oh! do not bid them farewell, lest you should spout inelegantly."

"Then

"Then I must entreat the tenth muse to inspire me," said Frederic to Georgiana, sinking his voice into a whisper.

"Come, my love," interrupted Mrs. Wellmont, "you can act Juliet; at least you could a year or two ago, so you must answer his lordship."

Her request was, if not so loudly, at least more ably seconded by the whole company; and poor Miss Waldegrave casting a glance of unutterable despair at Miss Rivers, was forced, *bon gré, mal gré*, to place herself in a most graceful posture, leaning over the orchestra, in order to sigh forth the love-lorn Juliet's deep-drawn—'Ay me's!"

"There now, is not she handsome?" cried Frederic, unable to repress his admiration.

"Don't make yourself ridiculous," said Howard, earnestly; "and do bear in mind, that love is at least a 'discreet madness, my dear Romeo!"

Lord Frederic was an inimitable actor;

 his

his voice clear, mellifluous; its tones varied, and exquisitely modulated; and he spoke as if the expressions he made use of were the genuine offspring of his own sensibility, and the enthusiastic language of his own heart. But just as the impassioned Romeo was uttering, in a strain of animated fervour, the well-known words—

"She speaks!
Oh, speak again, bright angel!"

his foot came in contact with a foot-stool, upon which was sitting, gravely erect, as if gazing with the calm eye of philosophy at the follies of the human race, the pampered pug-dog of Mr. Bentley; the footstool was overset; lord Frederic fell sprawling against it with a prodigious force, which caused his nose to bleed profusely; and the unfortunate Ninon received a hurt upon her left paw, and yelping with pain, and barking with

with rage, limped away to find her master.

For climax of his misery, and as if to give a finishing stroke to his ludicrous disaster, lord Monmouth appeared heading a whole troop of ladies and gentlemen at the door of the apartment, apparently to find out the meaning of the extraordinary noise his fall had occasioned, and most of the assemblage indulged themselves in repeated peals of laughter; in a few minutes, indeed those amongst the party who were either well bred, or compassionate, ceased to mortify his lordship by a display of their risibility; but Monmouth, who had been vexed, and angry at the cold manner in which he had been treated by Beauchief, since his arrival at Revesby Court, threw himself on a sofa in one corner of the extensive room, and was absolutely convulsed by a fit of inextinguishable, unspeakably-provoking laughter.

The fair Juliet descended from above, and with polite earnestness came forwards to inquire after the ill-fated Romeo; as she advanced near the spot where stood the woe-begone hero in a dejected posture, somewhat different from the one he had thrown himself into, previous to his grand and unexpected overthrow, she said—

"The orchard walls are high, and hard to climb,
And the place death, considering who thou art,
If any of my kinsmen find thee here."

"Alack!" murmured her self-elected and most unhappy lover, applying a handkerchief to his face—

'There lies more peril in thine eye
Than twenty of their swords."

"Why do not you leave the field of battle then?" asked lord Rosvellyn. "Fair, gentle, sweet Juliet! I really think you should

should counterfeit a swoon, at seeing the 'crimson tide proceeding from, and tinging all the side of the face of the enamoured Romeo."

"Well, at least," returned Frederic, recovering his volatile good humour, high spirits, and wonted gaiety, "as soon as my nose ceases bleeding, I hope, Miss Waldegrave, you will be so good as to finish the play, though the first act was rather an extraordinary one, and the scene more novel and ludicrous than sentimental and romantic."

"And the audience, instead of drawing out their handkerchiefs, to hide their tears of sympathy and distress, were obliged to conceal their faces, and stifle their inclination to laugh!" said Georgiana.

"I watched Miss Langham pinching her little finger—ha, ha, ha, ha! to endeavour, by giving herself pain—he, he! to stop her propensity to mirth," said Monmouth, in a voice almost inaudible.

"I saw Mr. Bentley walk out of the

room, and beheld sir Algernon Egremont in the act of taking a caricature of the circumstance."

"Very good; a vastly-clever attempt at shoving your own misdemeanors on the shoulders of other people, Mr. Bentley," said sir Algernon, colouring indignantly; "but all my friends are well aware that caricatures are my aversion, and that I never seek to render a person uncomfortable by open ridicule, and by idly laughing at accidents which might happen any day to one's self. I must own, that I had once, and only once, an inclination to smile at a trifling circumstance, somewhat resembling the one I have been an unwilling spectator of this evening, and that was when I beheld you, Mr. Bentley, when opposing me in the ——— election, pushed from the hustings, and denominated 'Peeping Tom of Coventry!' because, instead of addressing those people you wished to recognize as your constituents, you looked

ed through a short-sighted glass, and appeared deeply engaged in studying the expression of every vulgar brute's countenance assembled there."

Sir Algernon concluded with a sneer, and walked with an air of mock majesty, and offended dignity, out of the room; Mr. Bentley indulged his talent for satire as soon as he disappeared, in writing an epigram upon him, but did not take any further notice of the stately baronet, as he knew that without his interest he never could succeed in his wishes of representing the county of —— in parliament.

"Now then, my dear Miss Waldegrave," said lord Frederic (after leaving the room for a few minutes), "I am ready for another speech; laugh those who may, sneer those who can!" here his eye glanced contemptuously on lord Monmouth, who had not yet regained any composure of manner or countenance;

"we'll teach the tears adown their cheeks to stray, my lovely Juliet, I vow! yes—

'Lady, by yonder dim wax light I swear,
That tips with yellow all these sofa tops!"

"Oh!" replied Georgiana, laughing heartily at the good humour manifested by lord Frederic—

"Oh swear not by that light, that wavering light,
That sinks beneath the candlestick e'en now,
Lest that thy vow prove likewise wavering too."

"What shall I swear by?" returned Romeo in silver accents.

Cried Juliet—

"Do not swear at all!
Or if thou dost, swear by thy gracious self."

"I am very sorry," she added, breaking off her speech abruptly, whilst a deep blush crossed her cheek for an instant, "but

"but I cannot parody Shakespeare any longer."

"Can those beautiful lines," said lord Frederic, coming towards her, and taking her hand, "require any alteration? Oh! to hear those lips pronounce those charming words, *con amore*, would be ecstacy indeed."

Miss Waldegrave coldly disengaged her hand, which he seemed intending to raise to his lips, and with an air of offended pride, and unaffected amazement, at the presumption of her *ci-devant* Romeo, walked gravely out of the apartment.

"Come along, Frederic," cried Rosvellyn, "and take my advice, and—"

> "I pray thee, cease thy counsel,
> Which falls into mine ear as profitless
> As water in a sieve—give not me counsel!"

exclaimed Frederic peevishly.

CHAPTER XII.

In various talk th' instructive hours they pass'd,
Who gave the ball, or paid the visit last;
One speaks the glory of the British queen,
And one describes a charming Indian screen;
A third interprets motions, looks, and eyes;
At every word a reputation dies.
Snuff, or the fan, supply each pause of chat,
With singing, laughing, ogling, and all that.

Rape of the Lock.

THE day arrived; the great, the important day, in which Mrs. Wellmont determined to give a magnificent ball. The rooms were rubbed with beeswax, for the good lady was always one of the first to adopt any ridiculous fashion, and decorated with evergreens and artificial roses,

roses, so profusely and luxuriantly, that the whole splendid suite resembled a shrubbery.

"Quite a fairy palace, is it not, Dr. Freeman?" asked lady Langham.

"Rather too spacious, ma'am," was the reply; "the ceilings are too high, the apartments too ample, for them to look like——"

"Oh! you forget that the 'good people' hold their revels generally on an extensive plain, roofed in by the heavens."

"But certainly your ladyship must allow that this ceiling is not so beautiful as the star-spangled firmament," rejoined he.

"For my part, my dear Dr. Freeman," said the silly Lydia, "I can't bear looking at the stars; it spoils the eyes, and makes onequite blind. I remember, when Bella was studying astronomy, she was almost blind, and——"

"My love!" interrupted lady Langham, "we were not speaking of astronomy,

my, but of the comparative beauties of this ceiling and the sky."

"La! and I am sure then," cried the pretty trifler, looking affectedly upwards, and smoothing her hair, which met over her unmeaning forehead, "that I would much rather gaze on this imitation of it, with such sweetly-pretty figures painted all like angels, than on——"

"I suppose then, Miss Langham, you prefer art to nature," abruptly remarked the earl of Rosvellyn.

"I must confess I do not like green trees, waving woods, and blue skies!" she returned; "and solitude is dreadful to me."

"Those who are so well fitted to shine in society as you are," observed sir Algernon Egremont, with an ironical smile, "generally prefer the 'feast of reason, and the flow of soul,' to the melody of nightingales, or the dash of waterfalls."

When Miss Waldegrave and Julia appeared, their loveliness, their air of superior

superior fashion, and the unaffected ease and elegance of their deportment, attracted every one's attention; and Howard's heart throbbed with a new, an exquisitely-painful emotion, when he beheld the respectful homage sir Algernon paid the beautiful and amiable being on whom, in spite of her rejection of him, his fondest and dearest affections were still centered. Since his father's death also, he had flattered himself that the indifference she had formerly manifested towards him had given place to a more cordial manner; but Julia was naturally rather silent and reserved, and, of course, after what had passed between them, her conversation was necessarily more constrained when addressed to him, than when directed to other people.

He felt, however, that he had cherished many hopes when he beheld her thus surrounded by admirers, and treated with flattering distinction by a man, whose intellectual attainments were rendered more

more conspicuous by his rank and opulence, and the purity of whose morals, and excellence of whose heart, commanded respect, if his manners were not calculated to inspire sentiments of affection.

"Rosvellyn not dancing! what is the meaning of this, pray?" observed lord Monmouth *en passant*, with a curious look.

"I see no young lady of my acquaintance disengaged."

"Oh! if that is the reason, here is Miss Nugent sighing for a partner, and you know her."

"I had rather not dance," replied Howard.

"Ah! I understand," remarked sir William Laugham, "you would rather dance with another young lady."

Howard blushed, and looked conscious; "*le curieux*" gazed earnestly in his face, and internally repented having secured a partner, who led him away from the part of the room where lord Rosvellyn pensively stood.

"Egad!"

"Egad!" exclaimed he, "I don't know what to make of that fellow; I half suspect he has formed an attachment to *that* Miss Rivers; she is a pretty girl, you know, Miss Nugent, and is a relation of lady Rosvellyn's."

"I think cousins seldom marry," said Maria, trying to appear indifferent on the subject; "this is a pretty tune; do you like quadrilles?"

"That is a very sensible young man," cried sir William Langham to our unfortunate hero, who was gazing unconsciously after lord Monmouth, "a prodigiously-clever young man; and I think, when a few more years have passed over his head, he will make a good statesman, a great orator, a very great person; his grandfather was at school with me; he was vastly learned—it runs in the family—he read Greek, spoke Latin, and understood mathematics in a wonderful way. He used to tell me my name could

could not make even a tolerable pun; he was very fond of puns—he was accustomed to observe, that they were the natural children of humour, and the first cousins of wit; and talking of wit, I heard a good anecdote the other day. I like a little droll story introduced in conversation, but lady Langham will never listen to me; but you will—I am sure, my lord, you are too well bred not to like to listen to another's talk."

Rosvellyn endeavoured vainly to disengage the button of his coat from the grasp of sir William, but finding the effort useless, and only make the baronet seize firmer hold of it, he desisted from the attempt, and resolved to listen with patience and forbearance.

"I was going to tell you this story," resumed the practised old proser, "but I have really forgotten what I was going to say."

"You are speaking of lord Monmouth,"

observed

observed Mrs. Champignon, approaching, in hopes of hearing some intelligence calculated to gratify her craving appetite for scandal.

"Thank you for reminding me, my dear madam: well, I think his lordship a very clever sort of person, and a very good specimen of our young English nobility; the times are long since past, when men of rank and family wished to lower themselves in the world, by being completely immersed in the pleasures of eating and drinking."

"What do you think of Mr. Nugent?" returned Mrs. Champignon maliciously. "I am sure he is the most complete glutton in existence."

"Epicure, epicure! my dear ma'am, glutton is a word now quite obsolete," condescendingly remarked the old baronet.

"I think indeed in these days," said the lady tartly, "our language is refined, our manners refined, and our minds refined, till we have refined away all our valuable

valuable qualities; sincerity and frankness is my motto, and I care not who knows it!" As she spoke, she looked around her with an air of indignant defiance.

"Mr. Nugent's father was a very wise man, a humourist, a shrewd humourist," said sir William, shaking his head, as if to get some sense out of it, but with as ill success as an infant moves a rattle which it wishes to open, to discover what makes the noise within it.

"Great wits very often transmit no wit to their descendants," exclaimed lord Rosvellyn, forcibly disengaging his coat from the tight grasp of the old gentleman, and walking off in search of Julia.

"Ah, my lord! I was really fearful you had found the heat of the room so oppressive, that you had left it," said Miss Nugent, advancing towards him; "sir Algernon Egremont and Miss Rivers seem to have found it so, for all the last quadrille they remained together in the corridor."

Howard

Howard replied, almost inaudibly, "that he had been engaged in conversation by the prince of prosers."

"Oh! sir William Langham has seized you by the button-hole; I pity you from my heart—he catches his victim so fast, that it is almost as bad as being taken in a steel-trap."

"Do you dance any more?" asked Rosvellyn, hardly knowing what he said, for at that moment he beheld Miss Rivers in deep and earnest discourse.

"Certainly; that is to say, if I can find a partner for this waltz."

"As you are not engaged, I hope you will let me have the felicity of waltzing with you," cried Howard, who then saw Julia passing by him, and speaking with animated interest to sir Algernon.

She heard the words—felt pained at his manner of addressing Maria Nugent—sighed at his apparent neglect, for he had merely bowed to her as she entered the apartment, and said to her partner—"I feel

ſeel rather fatigued, the heat is so intense; have you any objection to sitting down this dance?"

"None in the least; to gratify your slightest wish," rejoined sir Algernon tenderly, "gives me the greatest satisfaction."

"You had better go into the corridor again, my love," exclaimed Mrs. Wellmont, approaching; "I am really sorry to have disturbed you both, you seemed so comfortable there."

Rosvellyn had heard enough; he seized Miss Nugent's hand, and for once acted absurdly; for instead of endeavouring to clear up his suspicions, he kept up a decided flirtation with his partner during the waltz; and the artful Maria aggravated his jealousy by every means in her power.

Sir Algernon and Julia in the meantime quitted the room, the latter vainly endeavouring to compose her mind, and to speak to her companion with the same cheerfulness

cheerfulness as before. Egremont perceived her emotion, but mistook its cause, and hailed it as an auspicious omen to his affection; he imagined that she was aware of his attachment, and was pleased at making the discovery. His pride revolted at the idea of her receiving the first avowal of his love in any other way than with confused humility, and gratified vanity; a refusal he deemed as impossible, as that the moon could shine during the day, instead of the night.

"Miss Rivers is silent," he began; "may I flatter myself she is neither ignorant of my sentiments, or inauspicious to my hopes? you do not speak, my beloved Julia! hasten, I implore you, to terminate my uncertainties."

"Your hopes, sir Algernon! I feel it impossible to return the affection with which you have honoured me."

"Madam! Miss Rivers!" ejaculated Egremont in haughty astonishment, then sinking his voice into a lower tone; "yes,

"yes, I see you are sincere; that you feel pain in inflicting poignant anguish on one who loves you so warmly as I do—but may I ask if another person——"

He stopped and hesitated—Julia resumed, less firmly—"Sir Algernon, to you alone will I avow, that once in happier times, and under more favourable auspices, I became acquainted with one, whose virtues and accomplishments made a deep impression on my untaught and youthful heart; in sorrow, in the bitterness of unimaginable affliction, of peculiar distress, he became the friend of the sorrowful, and the comforter of the distressed. We watched together over the bed of death—we poured together prayers to the God of the unhappy, to save the fondly-loved and still deeply-lamented being lying on it. He loved me, but I, from motives of duty, rejected him—the obstacle to our union then existing is now removed—but he loves me no longer; and yet, sir Algernon,

Algernon, my heart can never cease to be attached to him, and can never know another lord."

"May you be happy, Miss Rivers!" said Egremont, pressing her hand; "may you live to find yourself beloved, idolized, and never know the anguish I experience now! I feel it must be impossible to love another, after once having regarded you with affection; therefore I am sure that if my more fortunate rival knew your esteem for him, he—— But I dare not think of the bliss he would enjoy in passing his existence with one so gentle, so amiable, and so lovely. Farewell! God bless you! I shall not see you again; I shall return to my mother, when I can assume an appearance of composure; but I shall quit England for some months. God grant, that although I shall approach its shores miserable, forlorn, and desolate, that I may find you happy as you are good, beloved as fondly as I love you now!"

Julia

Julia burst into tears, and retired to her apartment, dejected and sad; she heard the light-toned voice of mirth resound, as she passed through the corridor, and saw, with indescribable agony of mind, lord Rosvellyn speaking with tender interest to Maria Nugent, who appeared listening to him with great delight.

She closed the door of her chamber, and sinking on her knees, prayed for support under all her trials. God heard her supplication, and sent a ray of peace and heavenly hope to illumine the darkness of her soul.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XIII.

> The present moment terminates our sight,
> Clouds thick as those on doomsday, drown the next;
> We penetrate, we prophesy in vain,
> Time is dealt out by particles.
>
> *Young's Night Thoughts.*

"So sir Algernon Egremont has taken his departure," said lord Frederic Beauchief, as several of the party crowded round the breakfast-table at Revesby Court; "well, I never imagined that man would have merited Jacob's reproof to his first-born Reuben."

"And what was that, pray, my lord?" squeaked Mrs. Champignon.

"I will thank you for that roll," inter-

 rupted

rupted Mrs. Wellmont, before he could reply.

"The cream you have exclusively appropriated to your own use, my lord!" cried Mr. Bentley.

"I wonder what you are thinking of," muttered lord Monmouth, bending forward, and upsetting a cup of tea into Miss Nugent's lap.

"Indeed," resumed Frederic, when the bustle attendant on this little accident had somewhat subsided, "I have so many questions to answer, and so many duties to fulfil, that I hardly know which to do; but as I began speaking of Egremont, I shall certainly go on expressing my surprise at his absence, and still more at his inconsistency."

Lord Rosvellyn lifted a cup of coffee to his lips, and endeavoured to hide the interest with which he listened to what was going on.

"He told me yesterday," remarked Miss Nugent, with a malicious smile,

"that

"that he intended staying here till Miss Rivers quitted Revesby Court; but I suppose something which occurred yesterday during the ball might have hastened his departure; indeed every body in the room declared they looked like a couple of acknowledged lovers; and it was whispered that the baronet was going to London to consult Rundell and Bridge about the jewels."

"She is a charming young lady," cried sir William Langham, "and I hope she will be happy in the married state; though to my fancy she looks too pensive for a bride-elect, and does not seem attentive enough to sir Algernon."

"Oh, there you are quite mistaken," rejoined Maria, with a spiteful laugh; "even Emily, who never observes any thing as she ought, could not help remarking what a dead set she made at him."

"She was with him all the evening," giggled Lydia Langham, "and I heard

him pay her so many compliments! and you know he is not very flattering."

"So much the better," cried sir William; "I hate people to talk nonsense by wholesale."

"But he never talks at all, papa."

"He is certainly like the statue of his grandfather cut in alabaster," remarked Beauchief negligently.

Here Georgiana, who had laid down her fork, and was fixing her dark eyes, with a look that penetrated the very soul, full upon the distorted countenance of Maria Nugent, exclaimed, vainly endeavouring to speak in a gentle tone—"Sir Algernon Egremont is not gone to London, but to Paris—he is not engaged to my amiable, my inestimable friend, but has been refused by her; *you* can corroborate the truth of this intelligence, my lord," she continued, turning to Monmouth, who was devouring a ham sandwich, "for you informed me of it. I should never have mentioned the

the circumstance, out of the regard I bear sir Algernon, but I could not sit by, and hear my more than sister slandered."

A tear started into her eyes as she concluded, and the blush of wounded feeling had hardly subsided, when Miss Rivers appeared, looking pale, languid, and spiritless, and yet so interesting and lovely, that her friend found her indignation rise again, as she thought of the malice which could have espied a fault in manners so unassuming, so modest, and retired.

After breakfast Howard and Frederic agreed to go out shooting; and as soon as they had quitted the house, the former, as if dreading to hear Julia's name mentioned, began to caution his cousin from falling in love with Miss Waldegrave.

"I am in love!" cried the other, rather pettishly.

"Endeavour then to conquer that attachment,

tachment, my dear Frederic," said the earl in a tone of pity; "for I see she does not return it, and I am sure you will have too much sense not to pardon my frankness in telling you so."

"I hope I have," returned he; "and I thank you for your sincerity."

"I implore you to leave ——shire," said his cousin.

"No—I cannot do that; I am really attached to Georgiana, and though I see that she now regards me with indifference, I shall not despair. Yes, I have for some days seen with sorrow that she shuns my society. You look surprised—you thought me a thoughtless fellow, blinded or misled by vanity; learn to know me now—under a mask of *étourderie,* I perhaps conceal a heart as warm, as sincere, ay, and as firm as your own. Psha, Rosvellyn! I speak rudely—I am piqued, I am mortified beyond description—grieved and vexed beyond idea at the ill success of my only true affection; but,

but, heigh-ho! 'the course of true love never did run smooth!' and why should I therefore expect an exception in my own case?"

"I hope," said his cousin warmly, grasping Beauchief's hand, "that you will have the courage to quit Revesby Court immediately."

"No, no, my dear fellow, not I, not I!" cried the other, exchanging his melancholy subdued tone of voice for his own customary sprightly cheering one; 'none without hope e'er loved the brightest fair!' and so here I shall remain to shew Miss Georgy Waldegrave that I, though a warm, am not a sighing, despairing swain."

"*You* in love!" exclaimed lord Rosvellyn; "it is absolutely impossible for *you*, even in any period of your life, to have experienced '*la belle passion!*' I was throwing all my fine feelings away on so reasonable a being."

"Yes," said the other, gravely shak-

ing his head, with a look of profound wisdom, "reason is a great enemy to love."

"And so is the self-conceit of a coxcomb."

"I am sure I am not very self-conceited, at least no more than most young men are. I like you too giving me advice! Good doctor take mine, and, wise 'physician, learn to heal thyself."

"I wish," hallooed lord Rosvellyn, as his cousin vaulted over a sunk fence, "you would carry your gun with a little more attention and carefulness; you will be found with a desperate wound in your heart some day or other, I believe, but not with the fire of your 'lady's bright eyne,' but rather with vile powder and common shot."

Reckless of advice, and fond of indulging his love of contradiction, instead of obeying his cousin's injunction, Beauchief went on his path singing—"Oh! there's nothing half so sweet in life's

life's young dream!"—and holding his loaded double-barrel gun still more negligently than before, as if glorying in disobeying the wise counsel he had received, or rather endeavouring to put an end to a conversation he did not approve of, by rendering himself a dangerous person to consort withal.

The two relations, therefore, walked on, at a considerable distance from each other, lord Rosvellyn regarding his companion with the same sort of instinctive fear with which a mouse hides itself from a lazy, luxurious cat, which, though not at the present moment inclined to commit any injury, might, if approached too near.

They shortly arrived at a broad sheet of water, now completely covered with ice, and nearly surrounded by a large coppice of young oak trees, whose leafless boughs were thickly covered with the frozen particles a hoar-frost had spread over them during the night, and which

the faint powerless beams of a January sun had not yet dissipated in the least. Dropping into the stream some of their branches, shut in by the ice, stood several uncommonly-large weeping willows, of a vast circumference, and growing with singular luxuriance.

Lord Frederic no sooner beheld the broad expanse of frozen water, than, with eyes sparkling with delight, after having ascertained the ice was hard enough to bear the weight of a man, gave up his gun to Howard, and began to skate with the most agile grace over the bosom of the still lake, and cut hearts, &c. &c. with all the elegant facility of an accomplished Russian.

In the midst of his rapid career, after having wheeled round and round in various evolutions, he skated towards lord Rosvellyn, and demanded his gun.—"I see a brace of woodcocks!" he vociferated in a stentorian voice; "I must shoot them."

"But

"But on land, I entreat you."

"No," said the impetuous young nobleman, stepping lightly on the dewy grass; "I am determined to skate with my fowling-piece on my shoulder."

> "One foot on land, and one on sea,
> To one thing constant never,"

cried Rosvellyn, aware that to attempt to argue would be only to exasperate, and not to convince.

Lord Frederic seized his gun, but had scarcely glided three yards from his cousin, when it suddenly went off, and lodged its contents in the body of the earl.

CHAPTER XIV.



Oh, woman! in our hours of ease,
Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,
And variable as the shade,
By the light quivering aspen made,
When pain and anguish wring the brow,
A ministering angel thou. *Marmion.*

With indescribable agony, with breathless overwhelming agitation, lord Frederic Beauchief knelt by the side of his beloved Howard, who, endeavouring to treat the wound as one of small consequence, to relieve his anxious solicitude and speechless horror, essayed, not only to rise from the ground on which he had remained for several moments apparently

parently lifeless, but also walked a few paces, to convince his conscience-struck and agonized companion of the fallacy of his apprehensions; but the exertion attendant on moving, the strenuous efforts, were too much for his debilitated frame to support, and had it not been for his relation's supporting arm, he would have fallen once more upon the earth.

"Rosvellyn, my dear Rosvellyn! speak to me one word—tell me what to do, for I am distracted with fear," cried poor Frederic, in stifled accents.

Faint with loss of blood, which streamed in large quantities from his wounded side, and utterly unable to stop its flow, he replied, in a feeble voice—"Be not alarmed, my dearest Frederic, but leave me—go to Revesby—send for medical assistance—be composed—for if a styptic was applied to my side, it would soon be healed."

Without loss of time the young nobleman

bleman did as he was desired, and flew towards the house; near the porter's lodge he met Miss Rivers.

Remarking the wild energy and agitation of his manner, and the deathlike, the ghastly hue of his countenance, she exclaimed—"For God's sake, what is the matter? Has any accident happened out shooting?"

"I have shot Rosvellyn!" he answered, in the low hurried accents, and with the frantic gestures, of benumbed despair.

She did not faint—she did not scream—she did not weep—but, with a frightful calmness, almost unconsciously demanded—"Where?"

"I left him scarcely alive near Moulton Lake."

"Thank God! then he is alive!" she repeated, with convulsive quickness. "Run instantly to the house; I myself will go for the surgeon; he passed this gate

gate but five minutes ago. Order a conveyance to be brought to the lake, and, for God's sake, be speedy!"

She flew down the avenue of lime trees, and in a few moments providentially succeeded in overtaking the surgeon, who immediately proceeded with her to Moulton Water.

When they arrived there, breathless with haste, Mr. Gisburne and Julia looked eagerly round its banks, but saw no wounded lord Rosvellyn; they called, and remained unanswered; nothing was heard like a human voice—nothing seen like a human figure. The solemn silence—the imposing, the deathlike stillness of all around, was unbroken, except by the howling of the cold north-easterly wind, and the rustling of the boughs of the weeping willows which hung over the frózen glassy surface of the waveless stream.

"He might be there," said Julia, in a

tremulous

tremulous voice, and they proceeded with renewed ardour and redoubled earnestness.

"Do not tremble so, young lady," cried the humane surgeon; "if he is not here, of course his lordship has been removed to Revesby Court; and if his wound had been mortal, or even extremely dangerous, his friends would not have ventured to do that."

"I see him lying beneath yonder tree!" ejaculated Miss Rivers.

"Be calm—be composed then, madam, and follow me."

Howard was not yet totally insensible, and opened his eyes languidly on hearing advancing footsteps, but gazed as if a thick film had been spread over them by the icy hand of Death.

After feeling the fainting sufferer's pulse, Mr. Gisburne beckoned gravely to Miss Rivers, and remarked—"If I could be quite assured of your being able to control your feelings, and retain

your

your self-possession and presence of mind, I would remain here, and endeavour to staunch the blood proceeding from his lordship's side in torrents, whilst you went to ——, and sent my assistant with styptics, and other things necessary to apply to a gun-shot wound. I need not, madam, recommend expedition."

"Oh! I will be—indeed I will be quite collected," returned poor Julia, putting her hand to her forehead; "I know where your house is situated, and will be back in less than a quarter of an hour."

As she finished speaking, she darted away with the speed of a roebuck, and in a few minutes arrived at the town of ———, which providentially was only a short distance from the place where the unfortunate accident happened.

Breathless with agitation, fatigue, and alarm, she reached the shop of Mr. Gisburne; she rang the bell—no one came to open the door—she knocked with redoubled

redoubled vehemence, yet still no person drew near—she listened in breathless agony—not a footstep was heard advancing—not a voice vibrated from within—" Great God!" he will bleed to death!" she exclaimed, with the piercing shriek of heart-rending and increasing anguish, and she felt her senses gradually forsake her as the dreadful idea crossed her imagination.

As she was giving up her mind to all the frenzy of despair, an elderly gentleman, passing by the door, struck with compassion at the acute suffering depicted on her pallid countenance, stopped to inquire if he could be of any service whatever to her, or if she wished to speak with Mr. Gisburne?

Julia briefly related the cause of her terror and agitation, and learnt, to her unspeakable comfort and relief, that the stranger who had thus civilly accosted her was no other than the assistant she had been sent in search of.

The

The gentleman, therefore, instantly, after having been made acquainted with her story, took with him what he judged necessary to dress our hero's wound, and accompanied Miss Rivers towards Moulton Lake.

"You had better," said he, "you had better not go with me—not go with me; you will be tired—you will be tired; and if his lordship should have bled to death before we arrive—before we arrive at the place of our destination, or be in the last agonies of expiring nature—expiring nature, it would only hurt your feelings—hurt your tender feelings to be present at the final close—at the final close."

Julia burst into tears, and this cruel remonstrance of the stuttering apothecary was of real benefit, as the calm, outward composure intense grief often puts on, is far more agonizing and more appalling than the sorrow which can vent,

vent, and consequently relieve, itself by tears.

There are some people who wish not to be present when those they love breathe the last sigh, and there are some, who, though they feel consolation in remaining with their dying friends, will not allow others to share the melancholy duty of administering to the wants of the sufferer with them, lest the dreadful scene should impress their minds with horror and alarm. Mistaken kindness! How much does it alleviate the agony of the parting hour, even when the beloved being for whom we mourn is unconscious of our presence, to kneel beside his couch of pain, to offer up prayers there for his recovery or his salvation, to watch the closing eye, to clasp the powerless hand, and to gaze upon the altered countenance, until we hope he is not quite insensible to the expressions of our affection—of our veneration—of our distress, than to be forced

forced from the chamber of death, to hear the stifled groan—the deep-drawn sigh, and yet be ignorant from whom it proceeds, whether from the dying, or his friends and attendants.

Mr. Waitfort was a good sort of man, but having been all his life accustomed to sit by the pillow of the dying, and look with the eye of investigation, rather than pity or horror, at the ghastly features of the dead, his feelings had become steeled, his heart had hardened into stone, and his manners, though soft, servile, and humble, sometimes, indeed not unfrequently, betrayed the careless indifference with which he witnessed all "the ills that flesh is heir to."

Julia was quite exasperated at the slow movements of the luxuriously-fed, fat, and indolent apothecary, who, after following her agile steps for a few minutes, relaxed the unwonted celerity of his pace, and absolutely crawled along like a snail, or rolled heavily, from one side

side of the road to the other, like a ship at anchor in a swell, or a huge turtle gasping for breath, and nearly suffocated by its own enormous fat.

"Miss, Miss, I must make bold to observe—to observe, that is, if my cough will allow me—hugh, hugh—that I cannot go at the speed of Eclipse—of Eclipse—of Eclipse, who ran a mile in a minute, any longer—any longer, for if I do, Miss—for if I do, I shall break a blood-vessel, and bleed to death, before lord Rosvellyn—Rosvellyn."

"Then give me the box, and I will run on alone to the borders of the lake."

As she spoke, she snatched the medicine-chest from the hands of the astonished apothecary, and in a few instants arrived at the place of her destination.

"Thank God! you are come at last, young lady!" cried Mr. Gisburne, as she approached; "not that I expected you sooner,

sooner, or even so soon, knowing the slow movements of my supine assistant; but if you had not brought that box with you at the present moment, I much fear lord Rosvellyn would have died, as I have not been able to stop the flow of blood at all effectually."

"Is the wound then dangerous?" rejoined Miss Rivers, trembling with exquisitely-painful emotion.

"If this styptic I hold in my hands, madam, answers as I expect and hope it will, there is no immediate danger to be apprehended, I believe."

"Oh! where is he, my cousin, my beloved cousin?" exclaimed lord Frederic Beauchief, advancing towards Julia, who had retired from the spot when the surgeon began to examine the wound. "I see," continued he, as if gasping for breath, and pressing his hand to his heart, as if to still its insupportable pulsation, as he gazed on her bloodless

cheek

cheek and quivering lip, "that I *am* a murderer!—that all is over!—that Rosvellyn is no more!"

"Be composed—be a man, my lord," murmured the miserable Julia, faintly. "Mr. Gisburne, I see, has hopes—great, sanguine hopes of his ultimate recovery; and I feel," she added, bursting into a fresh agony of tears, "that I shall not again witness the violent death of another dear and valued friend."

"But is he removed? tell me, I implore—I beseech you."

"No; the surgeon is at present dressing his wound, and consequently is extremely anxious not to be disturbed."

In a short time lord Rosvellyn was raised gently on a litter, and slowly carried towards Revesby Court, and Mr. Gisburne, Julia, and poor Frederic, followed almost immediately after.

"How is he?" asked Beauchief, in a voice almost choked with agitation. "Will

"Will he recover or not? tell me the worst at once."

"I should think myself wrong in giving false hopes," returned the medical gentleman, with a provokingly-measured sort of pronunciation, and a gravity of demeanour unspeakably repulsive; "but I feel justified in remarking, and openly declaring it to be my steadfast opinion, that if no considerable inflammation takes place, which, from the profuse bleeding, is not, by any means probable, likely, or even (I think I may say) at all to be apprehended, that ——"

"Oh! be brief, I conjure you!" cried Frederic, hastily, gnashing his teeth vehemently together.

"I will, to put an end to your apparent inquietude," pursued the other, with the same dignified primness of proceeding as before, and not in the least annoyed by the irritability of his companion, "on the subject, unhesitatingly

affirm that the earl will recover, if no tendency to fever ensues after the second day."

"Which you say is impossible, on account of the profuse bleeding."

"Not impossible, sir, but highly improbable," negligently answered the icy-mannered, unfeeling-looking, apparently-stoical, but really kind-hearted Mr. Gisburne.

The young nobleman looked as if he could with pleasure have murdered the grave personage walking beside him, but did not speak, and contented himself with darting glances of furious indignation on the tall, ungainly figure of the man of lancets.

"Madam," resumed the systematically-solemn Mr. Gisburne, turning courteously towards Julia, "I congratulate you on your strength of mind; had it not been for the energy, firmness, and resolution displayed in your conduct, your noble brother would have been a breathless

breathless corpse before now, as my abominably inattentive, supine, and indolent apothecary and assistant, Mr. Waitfort, did not arrive at Moulton Water until ten minutes after I began dressing the deep but not dangerous wound inflicted by a gun on his lordship's side. Pray, may I ask," continued he, with serious, sober, and respectful earnestness, " if your name is Julia, madam ?"

" Yes," she replied, almost unconsciously.

" Your name, then, lord Rosvellyn pronounced with great apparent affection, when he vainly imagined the tide of life was ebbing fast, and he was tottering on the brink of eternity ; but I had not, at that moment, time enough to inform him how much he was indebted to the prompt, ready, judicious kindness, and to the energetic exertions of his sister— to the excellence of her judgment, and strength of her mind. I must now,"

added he, bowing, with mechanical politeness, "go to my patient, whom I hope to find tolerably well after the fatigue of moving. I shall certainly see you, lady Julia, previous to my departure, to give you an account, whether favourable or not (I hope the former), of the state of the earl, your brother, as it is my maxim, and invariable rule of conduct, never to deceive the relations of the person whom I am called in to attend. I deem it highly reprehensible, as well as abominably absurd, to tell a flattering tale."

"Cold-hearted wretch!" exclaimed lord Frederic, as they parted company, "who can see Rosvellyn suffer, without feeling one pang. But I—oh! what a wretch am I, who have been the means of injuring him! Miss Rivers, do not go without speaking to me; I see—I feel you execrate—you abhor me; but, alas! believe me, I merit rather your sincerest pity."

"You

" You have it, my lord," sobbed Julia, extending her nerveless hand. " God bless you! Keep up your spirits, and all will yet be well."

" Kind, excellent Miss Rivers!" rejoined he, " ah! if my dearest Howard recovers, how shall I ever be thankful enough to you, or," he continued looking fervently upwards, " to Him who has power to give as well as take away!"

CHAPTER XV.

What equal torment to the griefe of minde,
And pyning anguish hid in gentle heart,
That inly feeds itself with thoughts unkinde,
And nourisheth her own consuming smart?
What medicine can any leech's art
Yield such a sore, that doth her grievance hide,
And will to none her maladie impart? SPENCER.

LORD Rosvellyn's recovery was tedious, but nevertheless advanced by gradual, almost imperceptible degrees; and in a fortnight after the unpleasant accident which formed the subject of our last chapter, he was able to endure, for a short time every day, the loquacious, chattering, noisy delight his warm-hearted cousin manifested at his improved appearance; not but that frequently lord Frederic

Frederic would urge the absolute necessity of his wounded relative's discarding his medical attendant, leaving off panada and chicken broth, taking a drive occasionally in an open carriage to refresh the faded bloom of his complexion, and, in short, by eating to create fever, by neglecting the advice of the clever Mr. Gisburne, and by endeavouring to open his wound again by motion, to undo all the good that had been done, merely to gratify the impetuous feelings of an unguarded moment.

"I hate that automaton—that 'soul of pitcher, heart of flint,' hard-headed, weak-minded brute, who regularly twice a-day comes to feel your pulse, look solemn, shake his unwise head, tell you to be prudent in a choler-moving voice, and deny you luxuries, comforts, even necessaries, my dear Howard," he exclaimed, one morning as his cousin was languidly reclining on a lounging chair, applying a smelling-bottle to his nose.

 "I hate

"I hate all physicians, surgeons, and apothecaries, grave, dogmatical, disagreeable, pompous, ignoramuses; I always look upon them as '*mankind's fell butchers with a nobler name*;' and automata are my detestation."

"You forget an automaton can neither speak sensibly, nor act wisely," replied Mrs. Wellmont, who was allowed to pay a daily visit to the invalid, on condition that the length of it did not exceed ten minutes.

"Talk wisely!" repeated Frederic; "why, he never opens his sneering lips, or distends his oracular jaws, by altering the position of his formal mouth, except to give advice."

"I only employ him for that purpose," languidly murmured the fatigued earl.

"And then, I am sure, ma'am," continued the other, "he does not act sensibly." Here he turned towards the first speaker—"Why, only think on the horrid absurdity, not to mention the unfeeling

unfeeling wickedness of this false, this deceptious oracle, who will not allow that poor pale being there sitting, or rather lolling, bolstered up by pillows, to eat enough to enable him to stand upright without assistance. Oh, it is too bad, upon my word! If I were in his place, I would rather undergo Sancho Panza's repeated whippings, than be thus barbarously starved to death, and destroyed by inches—by piecemeal, as I may say. Whenever the

> 'Hungry lean-faced villain,
> The mere anatomy—the mountebank—
> The threadbare juggler,'

comes here, I have the greatest difficulty in the world to hinder myself from saying—'Go, get you a physician to order you a medicine for your head, instead of pouring oceans of vile draughts down the throats of your ill-starred, unlucky patients'—

'A needy, hollow-eyed, sharp-looking wretch,
A living dead man; this pernicious slave,
Forsooth, *takes* on him as a conjuror,
And gazing in his eyes, feeling *his* pulse,
And with no face, as 'twere outfacing him,
Cries out—'He must not eat."

"I should like to hear," said Mrs. Wellmont, taking a peep at her watch, which, in these diurnal visits, she always carried in her hand, to tell her when the ten minutes she was permitted to remain in her guest's apartment were expired—"I should like to hear how you, my dear lord, would manage your cousin."

"Why, in the first place, I would order him a glass of sparkling champagne to recruit his exhausted spirits, and a bottle of fine old port wine to give "him strength."

"To give him fever, I say; but pray proceed; I have only five—no, only four minutes and a half to stay."

"Then, instead of these wishy-washy diet-drinks,

diet-drinks, and good-for-nothing decoctions and distillations of medicinal, or rather poisonous herbs, I would give him a slice of hot roast beef, a turbot, and a good ragout."

"Any thing else?" asked Rosvellyn, unable to repress a smile.

"Yes, you should do every thing you liked; your slightest whim should be complied with; you should eat every hour—ay, and drink every second."

"What, if I did not choose?"

"Oh! but you would; your lips look so parched, and even your cheeks seem thin and hungerly."

"I would thank you then to give me a tumbler of cold water, with ten or twenty drops of hartshorn in it."

"Not I; indeed I will not be accessary to burning your mouth, or making you sick. I would, with pleasure, if you would ask me so to do, empty the contents of that decanter out of the window though, or force the automaton to

swallow the contents of yonder little bottle of medicated tincture, without a drop of water poured into it. Oh!" continued Frederic, laughing at the idea, "with what delight should I behold the wry faces of the animal, and tell him, in his anguish, to think of Howard—to despair and die!"

"Here is some hartshorn prepared as you desired," said Mrs. Wellmont, offering a small glass.

"My dear madam, you have presented me with a glass of liquid fire," cried the earl, putting it down with a start of surprise and pain.

"Bless me! Gracious powers! I am particularly sorry. I hope your lordship's mouth has not been very much burnt?"

"Oh! not much; but I would thank you for that saline draught."

"I have thrown the distilled poison behind the grate," exclaimed lord Frederic, rubbing his hands with an ex-

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pression of great glee and evident self-congratulation at his boyish exploit.

"Very well then, give me some water."

"Let me pour a little wine into it—only a very little, dearest Howard," rejoined he, in a beseeching tone.

"My dear fellow," said lord Rosvellyn, beginning to be heartily weary of his companion's good-natured but somewhat troublesome officiousness, "I wish you would go out shooting, or pay a morning visit at Valverde; we have not heard of the welfare of its fair inhabitants for two days."

This was uttered with a gentle sigh.

"With all my heart," answered the affectionate Beauchief, "will I call on Miss Rivers and Miss Waldegrave; but never, never more will I handle a gun, or take aim at a woodcock."

As he concluded, a tear started into his expressive eye, and finding his efforts to dispel the intruding drop absolutely unavailing, he walked out of the apartment, followed by Mrs. Wellmont.

As

As they entered the drawing-room together, to their infinite pleasure they beheld the young ladies Frederic had intended going in quest of, who were come avowedly to see Mrs. Wellmont, but in reality to inquire after the health of her wounded guest.

As the young nobleman vehemently shook Julia's extended hand, and with earnest, grateful, almost brotherly friendliness, expressed his deep sense of obligation to her, he could not avoid remarking that her lip trembled, her eye was moist, and her cheek wan, thinner and paler since he had last beheld her; and he thought he could plainly perceive traces of recent emotion and repressed agitation.

Naturally penetrating, he quickly divined the cause of these symptoms of mental distress, and, with the ease of a well-bred, and the kindness of an amiable man, he hastened to change the subject of conversation, which however was the only one now that could at all rivet

rivet or engage his attention, awaken his interest, or warm the feelings, even for a moment, of his truly-affectionate heart.

All his thoughts were fixed upon lord Rosvellyn, and to see him restored to health, and still more, with a mind "replenished and rebuoyed" with hope, was his most ardent wish and his most earnest prayer. His fancied attachment to Miss Waldegrave, his feelings of mortified pride at her evident indifference for him, his love of shining, his affectation, his coxcomical follies, his puerile vanity, and his varied *whimsicalities*, all in one instant had disappeared, as the shadows of night before the approach of morning, or as the dew that bends down the beautiful flower is dried up by the cheering beams of a cloudless summer sun.

Mrs. Wellmont insisted upon her two young friends having ocular demonstration of the improvement visible in lord Rosvellyn's countenance. We will not even attempt to deny but that the good lady

lady urged the more strenuously their paying the earl a visit in her boudoir, because she wished to forward an immediate match between her sweet Julia and his lordship; for certainly this was the case, as she had observed their concealed partiality for each other, and was quite angry that no eclaircissement had yet taken place.

Every woman, not excepting the silly, or the completely-uneducated, is gifted with extraordinary quickness of perception in finding out another's weaknesses particularly that most amiable of weaknesses, love; and Mrs. Wellmont, though her intellect was one of the dullest imaginable, had quickly discovered that Julia regarded lord Rosvellyn with a sentiment far more refined than mere common regard, and far more tender than mere common esteem.

The earl was sitting pensively alone, gazing unconsciously in the fire, at one moment nourishing a faint hope that the lovely Julia had manifested some degree of

of affection for him, and betrayed that she no longer looked on him with indifference; at another thinking, mournfully thinking, that it was merely compassion which had prompted her to act as she had acted on the late occasion, when the tones of her own harmonious voice vibrated on his ear, as she ascended the staircase accompanied by her friends.

He listened with breathless agitation —he thought he heard her pronounce his own name; and was it only imagination, or was it a reality, when he deemed that when she spoke of him, her accents were less firm, more tremulous, more hurried? He had not time sufficient to determine, for in a minute afterwards the three ladies entered the apartment.

Howard saw no Georgiana; he passed somewhat rudely by Mrs. Wellmont, and, in an ecstacy of delight and gratitude, poured out the most impassioned thanks to his "ministering angel," as he denominated Miss Rivers.

We will not dissemble with our readers—

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ers—we will not attempt to varnish, or to gloss over, our hero's weakness; he talked a great deal of soft nonsense, and, we blush as we write it, our fair heroine listened to it with pleased sensibility.

She saw that she was beloved—beloved in spite of her rejection of him, and she was too frank, too candid, and too generous, to trifle with the feelings of the man she so highly esteemed.

Rosvellyn gazed on her blushing cheek—on her downcast eye, and experienced a sensation perhaps the most delicious that can animate the breast of humanity—hope, arising out of trouble, like the day-star from the waves of the gloomy ocean.

Still, after Julia had quitted the apartment, his doubts returned, for his nerves had been much shaken by the unexpected interview itself; and his health, naturally delicate, had been materially injured by the loss of blood, and the necessary confinement he was obliged to submit to; he was not however

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in want of a friend in whose faithful bosom he could repose his cares, and he immediately sought out Frederic, and told him all the fears which agitated, and the hopes which animated his heart.

Beauchief unceremoniously, and somewhat rudely, sought to eradicate the former by the power of ridicule, and to encourage the latter by all the force of rhetoric he was possessed of; but the person whom he addressed, and laboured manfully to convince, was neither misled by vanity, or destitute of a considerable portion of proper dignity, which worldlings misname pride.

"I have been rejected once—rejected-ed firmly and decidedly," said Howard to his cousin, after he had urged him, with his usual impetuositv, to offer Julia again his hand and heart; "and although her noble conduct, her touching sensibility, her strength of mind and judgment, were displayed, on the late occasion, to a degree which has unspeakably heightened my affection for her, yet I have

have still no proofs that she returns my sentiments."

"And what proofs do you require, pray, don Quixote?" returned the other; "do you think the poor girl can come here, and whine out, in mournful accents—

'Last year you wished to marry me,
But I to that said no;
And now I wish to marry thee,
And weep for love and woe?'

I pray thee, my good friend, get thee some sackcloth and ashes, and repent thee of thy folly—ay, and whip thy madness out of thee, most noble."

"I am only afraid—indeed, Frederic, I am fully confident," resumed Rosvellyn, "that Miss Rivers would have exerted herself with equal ardour, and felt as much pitying grief for the greatest stranger to her on earth as she did for me, were he placed in the same precarious situation; besides, I never doubted, as you seem to imagine, being possessed of her esteem; that," continued the earl, drawing

ing himself proudly up, "if I have merited obtaining, I have never deserved to lose; but I fear it is the regard of a sister which she feels for me, not the devoted attachment I would more willingly inspire."

"You are an industrious self-tormentor," rejoined his straight-forward, unsentimental listener; "and if you were not known to be gifted with a tolerably-large share of intellectual endowments, I should be tempted to say that you not only liked to 'rail at lady Fortune in good set terms,' and preferred being madly miserable to living quietly happy, but that you were the very reverse of a reasonable being, in short, a moon-struck youth, Quixotically brain-sick, and '*pazzo per amore*,' determined to play the despised lover, or the poor soul who sat sighing under a sycamore tree, singing, 'Willow, willow, willow!"

"Far from it, believe me," returned the other; "I am heartily tired of the last-mentioned tree."

"Now,

"Now, no more of that, an thou lovest me," rejoined Frederic with a gesture of impatient sorrow. "Poor dear fellow! how frightened *la belle* Julia must have been, on descrying your pale visage beneath the shade of those cursed weeping willows. I shall go ask mine hostess to cut them down—yea, I will uplift my voice, and require of her to lay the axe to their roots, and hew every one. Ah!" he added, with some exclamation which sounded like a scream, "here is that abominably-gawky Gisburne stalking into the house like the dead alive, or rather resembling an Egyptian mummy dug out of one of the Pyramids, set in motion by some strange piece of concealed mechanism. Well, this is the age of discoveries; but I am surprised at his being discovered to be clever."

END OF VOL. II.

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P70
